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ABSTRACT

Six individual briefing pamphlets for members of the commissions of the York (England) 1971 International Conference on Teaching and Learning English comprise this document. The Conference is cosponsored by the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) of Great Britain; by the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTE); and by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), representing the United States. Pamphlets detail issues and questions to be considered by the respective commissions and list the names and institutional affiliations of the invited participants. (RD)

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York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Commission One
Chairman: Leslie Stratta, University of Birmingham, School of Education
Co-Chairmen: Winston Layne, Department of Youth and Education, Winnipeg.
Ronald LaConte, University of Connecticut

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In welcoming you to the International Conference, we are inviting you to participate in an intensive week's work during which we aim to explore several fundamental questions which affect, and in part determine, the teaching of English for pupils aged 11-18. The week will be exacting, but we hope rewarding in helping us all to clarify and deepen our understanding.

In addition, we hope that a conference which brings together teachers from Canada, the United States and Great Britain will have other attractions; in the daily Open and Exchange sessions where there will be opportunity to find out what is happening in other commissions; in the informal gatherings and discussions outside the working sessions where issues of personal interest can be pursued in a relaxed manner; in the friendships which will be made or renewed.

And the venue itself will provide other kinds of attractions, for the city of York will be celebrating its nineteenth hundreth anniversary and visitors will be be able to enjoy not only the permanent features of historic interest, the Minster, the Shambles, the city walls, but also special events that include a Pageant and Tattoo. And beyond the city boundaries there are the moors, and further afield Fountains Abbey and the Bronte country. Free time has been set aside for you to enjoy visiting these historic places.

But to return to the conference itself, and to Commission 1 in particular.

Questions to be considered

A commission concerned with English in the Secondary School 11-18 has a very wide-ranging brief which inevitably raises problems of focus for a week's work. We shall outline briefly what the commission will be concerned with and why we arrived at our decision.

There seemed at first to us four major questions to focus on:

1 how conditions for teaching and learning in English are affected by the values of a school and the way it functions
2 the manner in which an English department operates
3 the role and influence of outside agencies on the teaching of English
4 the desirability or not of an agreed language policy across the school.

The issues each of these major questions raises are themeselves wide – ranging and we began to plan a week's work on them. However, our planning sessions led us to realize that structuring a commission around these questions would tend to compartmentalize and isolate the issues raised one from another, when ideally they should feed into each other. We had, therefore, to reconsider the structure to ensure that the issues raised would be explored in a variety of ways and cut across the four major questions. We have now decided on seven major questions which will ensure that this happens. They are:

1 In what ways can the processes we think of as English be carried on in the Secondary School?
2 How far are an English Department's methods and organization a matter of choice and how far are they imposed from outside?
3 How can structure be given to anything so personal as English teaching by a group of individuals? Is such structure necessary?
4 How far is it possible to estimate the progress of pupils in English and in what ways can this best be achieved?
5 What share should the English Department take in the initial and continuing professional training of the teacher of English?
6 What are the different aims of English teaching (e.g. development of a person, preparation for an examination, higher education, or for work) and how can they be reconciled?

7 What kinds of language awareness are needed by all teachers and how far can an agreed language policy be arrived at?

Obviously bald headings such as these are only partially helpful, for they map out only very sketchily the territory to be explored. In order to provide a more detailed map, we have identified under each question several aspects, and have furthermore tried to suggest many of the issues each aspect raises. (A detailed outline is to be found at the end of this briefing pamphlet.)

Methods of working

A glance at the final section of this pamphlet will show that despite our focusing on seven major questions only, the issues they raise are still complex and wide ranging. It seemed to us then that in order for depth exploration to come about, most of the working time during the week should be allocated to small group activities rather than large plenary sessions. We are, therefore, keeping the latter to a minimum. It also seemed to us that, with the limited time available, to ask each individual to attempt total coverage of all questions would result in a daily, hectic scramble from question to question with little or no depth exploration. Consequently, we have planned that participants should concentrate on two (perhaps three) question, rather than on total coverage, and explore these in depth. The week will, therefore, be taken in two phases. In the first phase, after the opening plenary session, we shall ask individuals to choose one of the seven questions and be prepared to work in a small internationally mixed group of about 8-10 people exploring the issues raised. The exploration might take several forms, such as discussion, evaluating materials, writing brief notes, reports, recommendations, or engaging in role tasks which will be suggested. Midway through the week there will be a plenary session to take stock of what has been achieved, to learn from others in the commission of their findings, to ask ourselves what still needs to be considered. The second phase of the week follows and individuals will be asked to choose a second question and re-form into fresh groups to explore the issues this raises. And at the end of the week a final plenary session will endeavour to take stock of what we have accomplished and what has still to be done.

These plans, however, will not preclude a group from ranging widely in less depth over all the questions, nor will it preclude a group from exploring one question only for the whole week. We hope to be flexible and to bend our plans to suit your needs.

Materials required

To help groups get to grips with the issues each question raises, we are collecting samples of many different kinds of materials from Canada, the USA and Great Britain which will be available for consultation throughout the week. If you could also let us have beforehand, or bring with you, samples of material to add to that we shall have gathered, we shall be grateful. (The detailed outline at the end of this pamphlet offers suggestions.)

Outcomes hoped for

One obvious outcome we hope for is that participants will feel that it has been fruitful to bring Canadian, American and British teachers of English together for a week to explore common problems. But we are also hoping for permanent record of the week, for it is hoped that a series of pamphlets will be published which record the findings of the commissions, and that these will be used to promote further teacher discussion and action in the three Countries. We are, therefore, hoping that during the week's explorations group recorders will emerge, so that the beginnings of the permanent record will come about.

Preparing for the conference

This briefing pamphlet is intended to give you information about the commission and how we shall work. But we hope that it will also encourage you to do some preparatory work for the conference. The issues outlined at the end of this pamphlet might encourage you to talk over with colleagues in school or in your local association some of their implications for you personally and nationally. And the suggestions of materials required might encourage you to gather together some of these and consider them in the light of the major questions to be considered. In all our planning, we have had close consultation and advice from our Canadian and American co-chairman, so we feel confident that the issues raised will be as relevant to our colleagues in North America as they are to us in Great Britain.

We look forward to meeting you in July.

Leslie Stratta, School of Education, University of Birmingham
John Way, City of Birmingham College of Education
Robert Protherough, City of Birmingham College of Education
Peter Ramsden, Paget Secondary School, Birmingham
Anthony Adams, Inspector of Schools, Walsall
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U.K. Working Party

Detailed Outline of Questions and Issues to be considered

Although most of the terminology used in this outline applies to the British situation, we trust that colleagues from North America will not have too much difficulty in translating it.

1 In what different ways can the processes we think of as teaching English be carried on in the secondary school?

(a) *Within the English department*

Issues raised:

The concept of a department and responsibilities within it.

Difficulty of talking in ideal terms – how far are different departments produced by different types of school, buildings, headmasters, heads of departments, patterns of internal organization (e.g. streaming, setting, unstreaming)? Relationships and tensions between members of a department (e.g. between specialists and non-specialists, media specialists, teachers with particular skills, drama teachers, librarian, 6th form specialists, graduates and non-graduates, new and experienced teachers). How are responsibilities allocated and rewarded?

What is the role of the head of department in the following? Framing of policy and writing of syllabus; selecting new staff; assigning teachers to classes; organizing formal and informal discussions; selecting texts and equipment; making arrangements for students and probationers; establishing contacts with other schools and outside bodies; relating and explaining policy of department to rest of staff.

What voice is given to other members of the department in any of the above?

Materials required:

Details from different schools outlining the way departments are staffed and how far posts are defined in terms of specific roles.

Details of head of department's responsibilities e.g. money he administers, part he plays in staffing, timetabling . . . .

Details of money available to department, process of ordering, stocks of books and equipment (plus local authority information for expenditure on books, libraries, equipment. . .).

Pictures, plans, details of rooms actually used for English teaching together together with projected schemes for accommodation.

A selection of advertisements for posts of different kinds, where possible supported by full details.

Film or videotape of English lessons in progress to show as far as possible a range of attitudes and approaches to what English teaching 'is'.

Modular scheduling materials.

(b) *By interdepartmental activities*

Issues raised:

To what extent is there a tendency for English to be subordinated to other disciplines in the various kinds of interdisciplinary schemes already proposed? What specific contribution can the English department make which ought not to be lost sight of? In what ways can the subject centred approach be broken down? What are the most natural groupings in this respect?

How can we establish more effective consultation and communication between departments? What implications does this have for school building and design?

How does the English teacher generate the right kind of concern with language development in colleagues who are specialists in other fields?

Materials required:

Specimens of 'Newsom' courses produced in various schools. Nuffield/Schools Council Humanities project materials – an important issue might be the limits and merits of this approach to humanities curriculum.

Publications related to this topic (e.g. Happold, Charity James . . .)

Information from Countesthorpe experiment.

Apex curriculum. Contract system materials.

(c) *By team teaching of English*

Issues raised:

What is team teaching? An alternative method of organization to the normal department structure or something more?

What implications does it have for the (i) power structure (ii) the morale (iii) the support of teacher's functions (iv) the training function of an English department?

What effects does the conception of team training have upon the idea of a syllabus? On the relations of an English department with other departments and outside agencies?

What lessons are to be learned from the contrast between English and USA/Canadian experiments in this field?

What is the relationship of school design to team teaching?

Materials required:

Some standard American books on the topic (e.g. Trump, Olds, Shaplin)

English books so far available (Adams, Freeman, Mitson).

Building plans for schools built for various approaches to 'open-plan' teaching (e.g. Countesthorpe, Alumwell). Examples of schemes of work and statements from teachers, based upon team teaching approaches.

(d) *By extra-departmental activities*

Issues raised:

In what respect does the most valuable part of an English department's work take place outside the classroom – and therefore outside the timetable and with totally different set assumptions about discipline etc. in relation to pupils? (English education as a voluntary activity)?

What is the role of the school play, school anthology, school newspaper, English club, drama club, debating society, literary society, school radio station, film club and all the other 'club' aspects of the English department's work?

Can these provide an integrating and forward looking policy integrating departments as well as English? Even within the confines of a conventional school education? Conflict between education and prestige of school/ department and how this effects these activities.

Materials required:

Materials such as published documents on the running of extra-curricular activities (e.g. Courtenay, Leach)

Extracts from syllabuses or other documents of departments that operate a policy for extra-curricular activities, including such things as school broadcasting (e.g. Crown Woods, Methold's Book-Tapes would be of value here).

2 How far are a department's policy, methods and organization a matter of choice and how far are they imposed from outside?

(a) *Role of head teachers and administrators – both inside and outside the school*

Issues raised:

How do the policies of local, state or provincial education authorities affect the English department? (e.g. book allowances, equipment, special facilities appointments of staff . . .).

In what ways does the work of inspectors and advisers help or hinder the work of the English department? What is their image and how has this come about? How especially are young teachers helped? What provisions is there for in service training and how well thought through is it?

Are local authorities at the cutting edge of educational ideas in English or out of touch? And are inspectors and advisers?

Should education be organized in a different manner (e.g. regionally) and if it were would it affect the English department for good or bad?

Materials required:

Documents of policy and advice from local authorities. Documents of advice to inspectors and advisers on their function. Documents on in service policies.

Information of local authorities' allowances and grants for English.

Liberal party statement on education.

Teachers' Centre materials.

(b) *Influence of school buildings upon the work of an English department*

Issues raised:

What difference does having a group of rooms closely together have on the work of an English department? How flexibly can rooms be planned and how desirable is this? What equipment might an English department ideally require and what facilities in terms of space? Would open planning be advantageous or not?

Materials required:

Plans of different school layouts, illustrating different ideas for English departments.

Photographs of different schools showing English department facilities.

Plans of workshop areas.

(c) *School policy*

Issues raised:

What are some of the values in schools and do these conflict with those of an English departments? With what effects? Will any particular form of school organization be more favourable to the work of an English department? Will attitudes and values of schools reflected in marking policies, homework, form ranking, reports etc. affect the work of an English department?

What effects do different policies of streaming and setting have upon the English department? What are the problems and possibilities for English teaching in mixed ability classes?

What do we mean by remedial work? How does it relate to (i) the acquisition of basic literacy (and how do we measure this), and (ii) other aspects of the English teacher's work? Do we want separate remedial departments (implications here for the discussion of setting and streaming)? Can we integrate remedial work with the rest of the department? What is the best use that can be made of (a) specialists remedial teachers and teachers of reading? (b) remedial advisory service ancillary to school establishments?

What is the relationship of remedial education to compensatory education?

What use can English teachers make effectively of hardware/software in the devising of remedial programmes at secondary level?

What effects do different values and organizations in schools have on the staff/pupil relationship and the work of the English department?

Materials required:

Documents from schools on their policies regarding homework, streaming, setting, remedial work and staff/pupil relationships together with statements of educational philosophy supporting their policies.

Official documents or extracts from reports and research findings on the above.

Specimens of remedial readers intended for secondary use (e.g. Inner Ring series, Tempo etc.).

Published remedial schemes and programmes (e.g. Breakthrough, Talking Page) together with any published documents presenting their theoretical justification. SRA Reading Labs should be included here, plus their advanced programme for 'A. Level students.

(d) *Timetabling*

Issues raised:

What voice is given to individual teachers and heads of departments in framing the timetables and room allocations of the English staff?

In what ways does departmental policy depend on the timetable? What demands does the school make on the timetabling problems of non-specialists teachers? What demands do other subjects make?

Materials required:

Modular scheduling and other timetable innovations.

(e) *Influences of external examinations*

Issues raised:

Are the constraints of external examination on the teaching in the classroom on the whole beneficial or detrimental? What is the washback on the school curriculum?

What provision is there or should there be for dialogue between teachers and examining bodies? How best might this take place and with what outcome to be hoped for?

What effects have experiments in examining had on classroom teaching? (e.g. Mode 3 CSE, multiple choice answers, spoken English) Is there a danger that these experiments will destroy reliability or uniformity of standards? What effects do the special demands of the universities have on the classroom? Is their effect detrimental or beneficial? What dialogue should there be between schools and universities? How do we/can we assess the judge the teaching of English? By what criteria – objective/subjective?

Can we learn anything from such fields as psychometrics and linguistics in the way of providing an objective measure of success?

Who wants examinations and why – employers, pupils, teachers, heads?

What are the alternatives to timed examinations? Continuous assessments – could there be no attempt at measurement? Could there be a balance?

What are the advantages and dangers of different methods?

Materials required:

Specimens of external examination papers and syllabuses at O Level, CSE Level, A Level and other kinds of public examinations in English such as those set by the Civil Service.

Examples of objective tests in English, including recently introduced MCT papers.

Specimens of Mode 3 Syllabuses accepted/rejected by Examining Boards.

Published critiques of examinations (Birmingham NATE reports, *Criteria for success* (NATE), *English Examined* (NATE), *English in the CSE* (CUP) SSEC 8th Report).

College Board of Examination, SACU material.

(f) *Influence of curriculum development projects*

Issues raised:

What provision is there for dialogue between schools and the development project? What form should it take? What part should classroom teachers play? How best might this kind of project be set up?

What effects do these projects have on the syllabus/classroom practice?

What is the role of the teachers' centres, in providing a forum, initiating local projects, monitoring national projects?

What is the effect of research findings on the teaching of English?

Materials required:

Examples of national projects (e.g. *Language in Use*); Schools Council/Nuffield discussions documents (e.g. *Dialogue* articles); local teachers' centre pamphlets; locally produced materials; research findings directly concerned with English teaching; Apex and Trent materials.

(g) *Demands of society and influences within society*

Issues raised:

How do the values and expectations of parents conflict with or support the values of the English department? What influence does the home environment have? How can it be used/counteracted?

What are the attitudes and needs of employers and are they in harmony or conflict with the English department? What are the washback effects of the demands of certain kinds of work (e.g. trade apprenticeships)?

Is there conflicts between some aspects of teenage culture and the values of the English department? (e.g. ephemera, hedonism, traditional loyalties) What are the positive aspects and how can they be utilized? (e.g. folk music).

Materials required:

Extracts from relevant research on parents/employers attitudes to and demands of schools.

Statement from the BFI on employers' expectations regarding English and similar statements from the TUC.

Statements of teenage attitudes. Values of the pop world.

Statements about society and school.

Extracts from work on low socio-economic groups and their attainment in English (e.g. Bernstein, Head Start).

(h) *Influence of publishers, educational broadcasting, educational press, educational films.*

Issues raised:

What conflicts are there between profit motives and educational needs for publishers and how does this affect the materials offered to schools?

What are the relative merits and disadvantages of prescribed and proscribed texts? What are the relationships between publishers and the DES, local authorities and school? Who really calls the tune about materials available? Is there therefore a need for an independent service to evaluate text book materials? What role can educational broadcasting play in the teaching of English? What effect does it have on the traditional timetable, approaches to teaching of English, sources of material? Does it influence how pupils with special problems are taught and if so how?

What is the function of the educational press (forum, pressure group, reflector) and does it effect the teaching of English? What is the quality of English textbooks and educational broadcasting programmes?

What part have educational films (and other films) to play?

Materials required:
Spectrum of text books for examination and other kinds of published material.
Paper from a publisher setting out his aims and problems.
Examples of some educational programmes (tv and radio). plus accompanying materials and teachers' pamphlets.
Statement from Educational Broadcasting on its aims.
Statement from Canadian National Film Board.

3 How can structure be given to anything so personal as English teaching by a group of individuals? Is such structure necessary?

(a) *The syllabus*

Issues raised:

Who wants a syllabus and why? – the school department, new teacher, non-specialists, headmaster, inspectors, parents, head of departments, the province and state?

To what extent in practice does a syllabus influence or is influenced by teaching? How relevant is a syllabus to what is being done in English teaching?

If there is a syllabus how best can it be arranged and organized and how is it to be produced (e.g. head of department alone or a departmental working party)?

If we do not have a syllabus how else can some kind of integration and pattern be achieved in the department's work?

What are the possibilities provided by a structured curriculum and what are the drawbacks? Can we distinguish broad categories or syllabus (e.g. the evolutionary which is amended every year or two, the manifesto of a new school or new head of department, the working guide which is largely book lists and allocation of skills to particular years)?

If so what are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

Is the structured syllabus a myth or a reality? How far is there in English a coherent pattern of skills to be learned, knowledge to be acquired, or experiences to be undergone?

Materials required:
Published syllabuses (e.g. IAAM Report *The Teaching of English*)
Reynolds *An English Syllabus* (CUP). Examples of published open-ended syllabuses (e.g. *Language in Use*; Humanities materials)
Specimen syllabuses from schools accompanied with a factual profile of the school (size, nature, organization) each selected to illustrate different principles at work (e.g. mandatory/exploratory syllabuses; chronological/topic based pattern). Canadian and USA provincial and state syllabuses.

(b) *The internal organization of the department*

Issues raised:

As 1 (a) and 1 (c) above plus the following:

Who orders materials and books and by what method? Who keeps in touch with new materials available (books, records etc.)? Who buys large items with new materials available (books, records etc.)?

Who buys large items (tape recorders. . .) school or department? Who establishes priorities? Does the department build up its own collection of duplicated material and pictures or does each member of staff acquire his own? How often are departmental meetings held? For what purposes? Which topics are best handled formally and which informally? How much continuous discussion takes place rigorously on an aspect of English teaching?

Materials required:
As 1 (a) and 1(c) above.

(c) *Intuition and preparation in teaching. The cohesion of textbooks?*
Issues raised:
How far is good English teaching intuitive, catching the right moment, and how far is it detailed preparation? How far can a group of teachers follow a syllabus for any particular year? Do course books overstructure and overinfluence teachers for good or bad? Is literature really a unifying and structuring force? What balance might be struck between literature and other aspects of the subject and does the balance lead to a unifying or fragmenting of the subject? Is it enough for each teacher to teach what he thinks best and enjoys most?

Materials required:
Examples of more openly and more rigidly structured textbooks.
Examples of packaged materials sequentially arranged.

4 How far is possible to estimate the progress of pupils in English and in what ways can this best be achieved?

(a) *Internal examinations and assessments*
Issues raised:
How do we assess and judge in English teaching and by what criteria; objective or subjective judgements ? What can and cannot be examined in English? Can an internal examination be devised which is both a learning experience and a testing situation? Is time spent examining worth it? Do we discover much that is new? Do exams give incentive to pupils? Do they discover anything new from them? Problems of standardizing assessments and exams over a mixed range of ability. What purposes are attached to internal exams? What are the advantages and dangers of continuous assessments to pupil and teachers?

Materials required:
Examples of different kinds of internal exam papers and schemes of assessment. Statements of criteria and marking schedules.

(b) *Marking and grading*
Issues raised:
What are the different purposes of marking work? What pupil/teacher relationships are implied by different methods used? How far are the different activities in English equally susceptible to marking or grading? To what extent are some of the important things which happen to pupils impossible to mark? How to cope with the load of marking ? And to prevent marking becoming our masters? Should pupils always be told their marks? Does one mark against an absolute or individual standard? Value of commenting both verbally and in writing and what kinds of comments are appropriate? Method of handing back work and its value?
Materials required:
Examples of work marked. Examples of work to be marked, and commented on. Tapes of spoken English for assessment.

(c) *Issues raised*:
How to provide useful and meaningful profiles of pupils both for

internal use and for use by other schools? What are accompanying dangers? What is meant by progress in English? What information other than academic attainment is likely to prove useful to teachers of English? To whom should it be available?

Materials required:

Examples of record cards from schools and authorities.

5 What share should the English department take in the initial and continuing professional training of the teacher of English?

(a) *The particular preparation of the English teacher; the non-specialists; all teachers in that they teach through the medium of English*

Issues raised:

What relationship should ideally exist between the training establishment and the school? How should students be introduced to the classroom situation? How can students best be guided whilst in school (e.g. member of staff as co-tutor)? Different needs of first year and third year students. How can theory and practice be interrelated? What is the value of team-coaching with students? Or one teacher with several students in his class? How valid is the assumption that personal development and professional preparation can be separated?

Materials required:

Various statements on teacher training (e.g. from *Education for Teaching* Graham Owens, correspondence between Professor Ree and teachers in *Times Educational Supplement*).

(b) *The probationary period*

Issues raised:

How are young and new staffs introduced to a school? What is the function of the head of a department? Inspectors and advisers? What opportunities exist for continuing training in the school? And within the Local Authority? And nationally? How should new staff be timetabled? Is a totally new pattern required for the probationary year?

Materials required:

Statements from new teachers about their difficulties. Statements from inspectors, schools, local state and provincial authorities how they meet the needs of probationers.

(c) *In-service training; role of teachers' centres; in-service training within the school.*

Issues raised:

To what extent can/should in-service training by teacher directed? What is the function of 'experts'? Should in-service training be a statutory requirement? What kinds of continuous periods of in-service training should be provided? Who is to control and coordinate the work? Should the work be linked to further qualifications, financial rewards and promotions? In what ways can a school provide a training ground for its present and potential teachers?

Materials required:

Examples of teachers' centres programmes. Examples of courses offered for in-service training. Summer school courses.

6 What are the different aims of English teaching (e.g. development of a person, preparation for an examination, higher education, or job) and how can they be reconciled?

(a) *Aims and values of schools*

Issues raised:

What different systems of values can we detect in various kinds of schools? And how far should an English department see itself as having special responsibilities and opportunities in this field? With what values will it be particularly concerned? How will this show itself in practice? How far is it possible to have departmental, as opposed to private and individual views in such matters? Are the values concerned with academic success in conflict with other which a school might hold and how does this affect the English department? What do we mean by liberal and humane values? How will values affect teaching methods and the syllabus? How will they affect the structure of the school (e.g. streaming, house systems)? How will different attitudes towards teenage culture and the world in general outside the school?

Materials required:

Statements of what people see as the aims of education, schools, departments of English. Examples of school songs. (*Forty Years On*) The Newsom Report and others. Statements about values and syllabus.

(b) *Relation to the world beyond school.*

Issues raised:

How do we prepare pupils for leaving school and does the English department have a special role here? What is the relationship of schools to prospective employers and to the Youth Employment Service? In what ways are the expectations and assumptions of English teachers different to (at odds with?) those of employers and the work beyond school? What is our attitude to work experience kinds of courses? Is there a case for 'work release' on the analogy of 'day release' in industry? What is the relation of the education agencies to the unions e.g. Advanced level craft courses or an apprenticeship for pupils? What is the role of the extended day and of the integration of school with community? (What have we to learn from the Cambridge Village College movement in this respect?) What are we doing effectively about the raising of the school leaving age? How ought it to happen?

Materials required:

Relevant Schools Council Working Papers. Syllabus and schemes of work aimes at RSLA. DES Building Bulletins on the 5th and 6th forms and plans of RSLA buildings in construction – see some of the commercial firms' brochures e.g. Vic Hallam. North American occupational entrance and on the job training materials.

(c) *The school and the community*

Issues raised:

Do the values and expectations of parents conflict with or support those of the English department? What notice should the English department take of parents' views? Has the school a role to play in a local community wider than its present role? If so how will this affect the English department? What effect do some aspects of teenage culture (emphasis on the ephemeral, hedonism, generational loyalties, growing concern for social issue) have on the English department's work? Is there an overemphasis in society on materialism, meritocracy, economic values and if so how does this affect the English department? What is the affect of the varieties of methods, standards and attitudes of the schools feeding into the secondary school on the English department? How can dialogue best be set up between them?

Materials required:
Examples of experiments in which school plays a wider part in the community.
Statements from parents about their expectations of a school for their children.
Statements from teenage culture.
Core proposals from Manitoba on dialogue between students and parents.

7 What kind of language awareness is needed by all teachers and how far can an agreed language policy be arrived at?

Issues raised:
What exactly do we mean by language 'awareness' and what does this involve for the teacher of English?
How far are teachers of English aware of the different varieties and purposes for language? What range of varieties and purposes are usually acknowledged and what are usually overlooked? What implications follow?
What importance do teachers of English place on talk in learning?
How far are they aware of different kinds of talk? Can they see value in discursive talk and if so what? Value in small group talk? Awareness of different kinds of writing and their value? (e.g. creative/poetic, transactional) What understanding have teachers of English of the importance of listening? How far do teachers of English recognize the usefulness of the pupil's own styles of language in learning? What help is given to pupils to bridge the gap between their own styles of language and those appropriate to other disciplines? How far are teachers of other subjects aware of any of the demands and implications of the styles of language they habitually use in teaching? Do teachers of English have any special responsibility towards the other subjects? If so what? And how do they discharge it? What can an English department do to increase language awareness among their colleagues?
What should be the English department's policy towards the pupil's own usage? (e.g. what balance between vital, original uses of language and the demands of society and standard usage) When to ignore these? How can an intelligent programme of language exploration study and understanding, be devised for pupils? Is there a chronological development in the pupils competency in language? Is it desirable or necessary? If it is what should it include? How far is an agreed policy toward language possible even within an English department? What should it include?

Materials required:
Statements of policy, principles about language and its implication in learning.
Textbooks illustrating a variety of language courses. Other materials such as programmed learning, audio-visuals.
Examples of spoken and written language of different varieties, from different varieties, from different subjects as well as from English, illustrating some of the demands and usage asked of pupils.
Materials produced by research groups (e.g. *Language in Use* and other Schools Council projects.
Examples of textbooks in other subjects (and research/trial material e.g. Nuffield Science).

York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

Commission Two

Chairman: Harold Rosen, University of London Institute of Education

Co-Chairmen: Wallace Douglas, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Don Rutledge, Director, Language Study Centre, Toronto

1. The pattern of the commission's work

For most of the time we shall be working in groups of approximately twenty people. These groups will be based on choices made at the outset, but at the half-way point in the week the initial groups will complete their discussion and the commission will reform into new groups. These new groups will discuss the same themes and examine the same materials as the initial groups. Thus everyone will be able to explore two of the sub-themes as well as extending their encounters with other members of the Commission.

When the groups are first constituted they will not proceed immediately to a discussion of their themes but will all spend the time specially allocated to discussing what we have called the Common Core (see below). If all this sounds rather complicated, we can put it like this. Each member will make up his programme in this pattern.

1. Common Core 2. Group work (1st half of week choice) 3 Group work (2nd half of week choice).

The best way to work out your programme is to consult the following summary which also gives the names of the members of the preparatory committee who have taken responsibility for particular aspects of the work.

Common core: (Paul Williams) *The school sub-culture*
A documentation of the school sub-culture and a discussion of its influence on learning and teaching activities.

Group 1 Margaret Spencer) *The teacher-initiated theme*
Theme and materials selected by the teacher. All English work subordinated to the theme and its materials.

Group 2: (John Ashwin) *The teacher-initiated theme:open-ended*
The teacher initiates the theme and adds material from time to time but pupils are free to take the theme in whatever direction they like.

Group 3: (Nancy Martin) *Pupil-initiated work*
The pupil is free to suggest his own work plan. The adviser and helper.

Group 4: (Paul Vernon) *The English curriculum sub-divided*
A single aspect of the English curriculum is handled separately with own materials and own objectives.

Group 5: (Harold Rosen) *The detailed planned curriculum*
Provides for all English work according to a prearranged scheme which lays down content, work schedule, materials and objectives.

2. Methods of work

Groups will function above all by careful examination of detailed documentation which will be drawn from work in schools and which consists of video-tapes, film, tape, teachers' accounts, school materials and pupils' work. There will be sets of materials for all members of the commission irrespective of their group choice.

Teachers responsible for the work being discussed will in most cases be present and in some cases will initiate 'workshop' activities which will replicate shcool assignments.

In general group procedure will begin by discussion of the documentation and proceed to a consideration of relevance to the theme of the commission. We expect groups to modify and adapt to our arrangements as the conference proceeds.

3. The common core

Our aim in these three sessions is to explore to what extent and in what

ways the sub-culture of a school, the total environment in which teachers and pupils find themselves, conditions the activities of both. Our commission suggests in its title – 'Chance, Choice or Programme' – that there are at any rate three modes of teaching and learning, three concepts of syllabus planning. To what extent, though, are all three modes open to any one teacher in a specific school? Does *he* decide how to teach, or does the school decide for him – by defining (explicitly or implicitly) the teacher's and the pupils' roles, the activities and modes of discourse and enquiry proper to each? Does the school encourage teachers to consider the wishes of the pupils? Do the pupils feel free to offer their suggestions, to question the direction a particular lesson is taking? Do the restrictions of formal dress and address; of such rituals as daily assembly and annual prize-giving; of school rules, rewards and punishments; of termly examinations, grading and reports – do all these affect the kind of activity possible within the classroom, the kind of relationship possible between teacher and pupil, the kind of language, the kind of thinking, possible? At the conference we hope to illuminate this problem in three ways.

We shall watch a recent television programme, presented by Granada Television, *Seven plus Seven*. The scope of this film is wider than the scope of our enquiry, but includes it. The film is concerned to explore how children are conditioned by their total environment – geographical locality, community, home and shcool – to adopt the attitudes, the behaviour, the language of their tribe. This film shows us extracts of an earlier film *Seven Up* of half a dozen seven-year-olds. Other films will be available to delegates for viewing during the conference: the earlier film, already mentioned, *Seven Up*; and three programmes from the BBC Television series entitled *The Expanding Classroom* which aims to illustrate how the physical environment of a school and its total sub-culture affect the kind of learning activity, and the kind of living, possible. The three films we shall have on loan are: *Elizabethan Village*, where a senior class at Aston-under-Hill primary school are seen reconstructing life in Elizabethan Times; *Eveline Lowe*, an exploration of a new open-plan primary school in London, and the relaxed, domestic relationships within the school; and *Eynsham*, a team-teaching situation.

In our second session, John Elliot who has worked closely with Barry Mcdonald, assessor of the Humanities Curriculum Project, will talk and lead discussion. As assessor, Mr Mcdonald is concerned to describe and evaluate the educational impact the project makes upon the schools that are using it, and the degree to which teachers and pupils can adapt to the suggested mode of learning. Whenever possible, Mr Mcdonald visits a school before it begins to use the project material, and attempts to build up a picture of the school sub-culture. On the basis of this picture he attempts to forecast likely responses, and can later compare these with actual responses. John Elliot will talk to us about their findings and lead us towards a more detailed exploration of our first concern – to what extent does the sub-culture of a particular school encourage or inhibit certain modes of learning. 'Chance, Choice or Programme' – is the teacher really free to use all modes? Or must we first revise our blue-print of a school?

In our third session, we shall ask members to consider some of the ways in which, sometimes consciously, sometimes almost unconsciously, we as teachers, head-teachers, parents, *and* children create the blueprint of the institutions we are concerned with. The school faces the world and presents

to the outside community an image of what it stands for, what are its educational ambitions and principles. It does this sometimes explicitly – in a school prospectus, a headteacher's speech on prize-day or parents' evening or within the pages of a school magazine, and in letters to parents and school reports; sometimes by implication, in the visible and outward form of such communications and the language in which they are expressed, and by the controls it places or does not place on the out-of-school behaviour ot its pupils. But the world, too, has its say: 'This is *our* blue-print, the image we want you to project - fancy publishing that in the school magazine! Outrageous!' 'Marvellous!'

The school also faces inwards and presents an image to its members – pupils and teachers. It does this in part through the school rules and advice to to teachers. It does this in part through the school rules and advice to teachers; through the conventions of appropriate behaviour and language it explicitly lays down; through the grading, selecting, testing procedures it adopts internally and the external examinations it subscribes to; through the subject syllabuses and the quantity, variety and kind of extracurricular activities it initiates and encourages. This image the children have to learn to 'read', and to some extent accept, and promote. A selection of specially commissioned logbooks written by children over a period of a week, describing their school life and their reactions to it., may illuminate to what extent they do.

What limitations does such a blueprint (devised, revised and subscribed to by teacher, parent and child) set to the kind of teaching-learning situation possible within the school? We shall be illustrating these problems generally in an exhibition display at the conference; in our third session, we shall provide a small selection of such 'evidence' for close examination and discussion.

4. The work of the groups

Group 1

The concept of syllabus planning to be explored by this group is that of a theme chosen by the teacher and exploited by the teacher and the class in various ways.

When a teacher chooses a theme he sees certain obvious advantages for himself and his pupils, especially if he has a class with a wide variation of interest and ability. A theme gives him a chance to collect in advance an array of related material. He can suggest the tasks for the pupils so as to offer them a rich set of options within the kinds of discourse possible in English lessons and focus on different aspects of language development in turn. The teacher's preparation may include notes and directions for pupils to proceed on their own so that he is free to work with small groups in a more concentrated way. From time to time the class may come together to share experiences, or a particular experience, e.g., a poem, or to allow the teacher to inject new material or suggest new directions. The advantages of a theme treated in this way include exploration in breadth and depth of a range of related language activities. Advantages of the same order are claimed for the pupils who can share responsibility for the work to be done. If the theme is well chosen, they feel that the contribution of their own experience is significant and relevant, while the new experience adds to their learning and development. What then should we explore further?

If the thematic approach is a good one we need to be fairly clear what its strengths are. Everyone working on the same topic may result in a wide range of significant activity or it may produce a diversified

statement of the comfortably familiar. How does one choose a theme? Are there any criteria to be derived from the age of the pupils, the length of the exercise (who gets bored first, the pupils or the teacher)? Is the time to be spent on it geared to the stamina of the most curious or biddable, or to the least engaged? We should profit from discussing qualitative differences between criteria for theme selection.

In addition, it may seem that the investment of a great deal of preparation and selection of material commits the teacher and the pupils in advance so that there are fewer opportunities for them to take up subjects which arise from day to day or to pursue contingent areas of speculation and concern. The place of individual initiative needs some consideration and many teachers will want to investigate the *exact* range and scope possible within any one theme. Does it, for example, accommodate literature? The further question arises as to whether theme work of this kind is distinctively the concern of the English teacher. How does it differ from other kinds of integrated work? Finally, what does the teacher look for to see if progress is being made?

To help us examine these questions we have collected samples of the material used in a London comprehensive school on the theme: *Water*. A series of videotapes prepared by the Inner London Authority have been made available to us in their unedited form so that we can consider larger samples of classroom work in discussion, reporting, writing, dramatic role playing. We shall see a teacher at work with his class and he will later inaugurate discussion in the group session. He will be joined by the film editor so that we can compare our impressions with their mature judgment of what happened in the classroom and the responses of some of the teachers for whom the programme was intended. For each member of the group a pupil's guide to the work on the theme and a pack of 18 items designed for the pupils. We hope to do some work on these at our own level. There are also booklets of notes for teachers and we shall have the pupil's contributions to study in the light of the general questions we have asked. Our concern is to examine the evidence together with the implicit and explicit claims made for work on a particular theme .

Group 2

This group will be concerned with an approach to planning where the teacher takes the responsibility for initiating a theme or topic, but where there is no *preplanned* follow up or development. The pupils take the theme in whichever direction they like using the provided materials if and as they wish. The teacher aims to establish an atomsphere and a pattern of work which allows for many kinds of activities, some of which are completely pupil-directed.

Clearly this is best illustrated by referring in detail to a real situation where such an approach to English teaching exists. We have chosen to look at the work of a mixed-ability 4th year class (14-15 year olds) at Vauxhall Manor, a girls' comprehensive school in a predominantly working class area of south London. Mrs Catherine Berreen who is Head of the English department at Vauxhall Manor and also the class teacher involved will be at the conference to talk to us of her work – the principles behind it, how it works in practice, and the opportunities and problems it creates.

We plan to document our inquiry by video tapes of the pupils of the school at work, photostats of individual pupils' work, a record of how the work of the whole class and of individual pupils developed over a period of three or four months with examples of the materials provided – films, poems, books and worksheets. We hope that this fairly wide range

of documentation will give us as real a context as possible for our study of what may seem to many to be a dangerously unstructured approach to English teaching.

Each group has been allotec' four long sessions for their work: one of 1½ hours and three of 2½ hours. We plan to spend most of the first two sessions in presenting and commenting on the approach, the situation, and the material. For the second two sessions we will in a way enact the approach we are concerned with – we will be free to work in any way we wish. It is expected, however, that the questions that the first two sessions have thrown up will occupy most of our attention. Members of the group may have worked in the same way but with different results; they may feel that it requires special conditions for this approach to work successfully; they may be able to confirm and even document the value of the approach in a totally different situation; they may completely reject the approach.

Without deciding in advance what the group will wish to do, there do seem to be some fairly obvious questions for discussion, some of which might well occupy our attention:

What advantages has this approach over others?
Has it any serious inherent disadvantages?
How far is success dependent on a tradition of working in this way?
Does open-ended response rely heavily on the provision of very varied resources?
How does the choice of material affect the kinds of response?
How and when is new material introduced?
Would the approach work in a streamed situation?
Does the approach cater for the needs of pupils with very great or very little ability?
To what extent are *all* aspects of English covered by this approach?
How can the teacher assess the progress of individual pupils?
Can the English department 'go it alone' in establishing this pattern of work?

Whether our discussions resolve themselves into a confrontation on the basic issues raised or into a corporate attempt to deal with some of the questions will depend on the make-up of each group. Both outcomes could, however, be fruitful in their own way.

Group 3

Choice in the fourth year: An experiment at Walworth School

In the fourth year we have five periods of 40 minutes with our classes and we all have one double period and we work with our classes in this way . Three lessons are the *teachers' time* when we are responsible for providing material and organizing work. Two lessons (always timetabled as a double period) are the *pupils' time* when they are responsible for deciding what they will do, organizing and programming their own work. So far we have not gone into this 'cold'. The first 3 or 4 weeks of the Autumn term have been spent in establishing ourselves with our classes, building up a working relationship and then in talking about their education with them. We ask them to think about school and to consider what it is offering. We then ask if they think there is a place for pupils' choice in education and finally propose the division of the week into their time and

our time. We talk about work that has been done in previous years and finally invite them to choose what they will do. They may go out of school by themselves for this work and so a letter is sent home explaining the scheme and asking for overall permission. Finally the first plans are drawn up and we ask them to tell us the names of people in the groups, the work the group wants to do, the plans for the first session and to list any equipment they would like e.g. books, tape recorders, camera. Not all of them work in groups some prefer to work singly or in pairs and we would try to limit the size of group to 5. We ask for all this information to be entered on a form and there is a space at the bottom of the teachers' comments, for, although we stress that the responsibility for programming is theirs, we also say that we want to help and to be able to talk about the work with them.

They are not, of course, completely free. They are constrained by their expectations of school and by their knowledge of us. We also say that something must be done. A pupil may spend all his time reading but he may not mooch round school or just sit. We would be prepared to accept aimlessness for a time as a necessary prelude to decision and commitment.

What do they choose?

One thing that has interested us is that over the years as we have built this element more firmly into our scheme we have had an increase in the number of topics which are more acceptable in our eyes, e.g. It is rare for football to mean compulsive copying of lists of players or league tables.

Each year a few groups have wanted to look at the provision for old people in the area. This year a few groups have wanted to find out more about strikes, drugs, crime, housing and other topics. One group spent half a term looking at provision for teenagers. Two boys are engrossed in engines and their mishaps.

One group had an interesting development. They started by reading poems, by themselves and then to each other. They became attracted to a few poems describing poverty and asked to borrow a camera so that they could get some slides to put beside the poems. One one of their expeditions they discovered an overgrown cemetry and were attracted by some old tombstones. Currently they are making more slides and reading more poetry. They have made a tape of some music they think appropriate and hope to produce a photoplay. It is possible, however, that their experience will lead them in another direction and the photoplay may never be produced.

This leads to a question we have talked about a lot. How much does the end product matter? To us it matters very little. The commitment to start on something, to become involved so that the involvement and curiosity dictate the path and the pace; and the whole process of talk, of agreement and disagreement of disappointment and excitement are what we hope and work for. If something is produced at the end which we can all enjoy and of which its makers can be proud then obviously we are delighted but we do not believe this work can be judged by the appearance/success of an end product. But we wonder about the pupils. Probably the end product matters a great deal to them and for that reason we ought to rate it more highly. Certainly for some of our pupils the experience of something they recognize as a failure could be damaging and we ought to guard against this.

How does this fit in to the whole English scheme?

In the first two years at Walworth School English, history and geography are integrated. In practice this maens that each teacher has 9 periods with a class and this is called World Studies on the timetable. These periods are blocked to include one whole morning and one whole afternoon. We hoped

when we launched this scheme that it would be possible to have a variety of activities going on in one class at any one time and our hopes have been justified. This means that pupils get used to working and talking together and to choosing an activity inside a fairly rigid framework. There is a fair amount of equipment available at the lower school and by the end of the second year the pupils are well able to handle tape recorders, overhead projectors, slide projectors and some of them have used cameras in school. The stimulus and planning has remained the responsibility of the teacher.

In the third year we want to build on this, to withdraw ourselves a little and to enlarge the possibilities of choice. The responsibility for initial stimulus and initiation remain ours but we try to say take this story or poem and interpret it in a any way you like. We offer themes or ideas and ask them to develop these. Alternatively we list several activities in which they must all have engaged by the end of one term and provide material from which they can choose.

In the fourth year we put all the responsibility for choice, initiation and programming on the pupils for part of our allotted time and we are looking forward to our own Mode III syllabus for CSE with course work carrying most of the marks and with a still greater possibility for pupil choice. We hope to include in this a self chosen group project, e.g. a film, production of a play, photoplay where the pupils will be assessed not only on the end product but on each member's understanding of the part he contributed to the whole.

We believe that choice is a part of growth and, therefore, has a place in all parts of a school curriculum so that, along with other kinds of growth, it can be fostered and encouraged. We are invigorated by this work because of of the greater dimensions it has given to the dialogue of the classroom. We find as teachers that we are able to enjoy what we have called a 'school journey relationship' with more pupils in the classroom than before we started working in this way. We believe this means that more pupils are ready to consider our suggestions of books and poems than before, now that we are more obviously trying to trust them 'to make independent decisions'. But still we have to face the challenge that we often put to ourselves. Are we evading our responsibilities? Are we leaving them inside their own experience and culture when we know there is so much beyond that that is good?

We have been encouraged and excited by chapter 6 in Professor Britton's book *Language and Learning* which has given respectability to our hunches and placed our work in the wider context where we hoped it belonged. He writes:

> What is required today, it seems to me, is an urgent look at our secondary education having in mind the need of an adolescent to become himself: to make important choices about himself and his work and his relationships: to match his individuation with involvement – intellectual, aesthetic, social, moral: to commit himself: to make independent devisions rather than to keep promises: his need to be trusted. There is much that wants altering both in the ways institutions are organized and controlled and the way teaching and learning are related in the classroom. (*Language and Learning* p. 272.)

At the conference we plan

1. to say more about the work and show a film of some groups in action
2. to show some of the films and photoplays made by the groups and to show examples of written work
3. to play a videotape of the group who worked with old people talking about what they had learned
4. to play a video-tape of some pupils talking about the importance they attached to this way of working
5. To examine ways of evaluating this work. Here more than anywhere else we look for help.

Group 4

Group 4 will be concerned with a single aspect of the English curriculum handled separately, with relatively independent objectives.

Much classroom teaching would probably come under this heading: lessons devoted to reading, or the teaching of basic skills; lessons in which a whole class studies a book together; a sequence of lessons devoted to discussion of poetry; separate drama lessons; any series of lessons devoted to a specific task required by one of the public examinations. We have chosen as a particularly carefully thought-out example of this approach, the *Languague in Use* Project of the Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English teaching.

Language in Use is a collection of independent units or teachers' sheets, each offering a plan for a series of lessons lasting, in total, between two and five hours. The unit suggests various activities related to a particular aspect of language experience together with practical recommendations for their use in the classroom. The units are grouped together under nine themes explored (e.g. Language and Information, Observing Speech In Action, Precision and Interpretation). The following list of titles gives some idea of the range of topics covered by individual units: words in the description of actions; dialogue in children's fiction; spoken style in broadcasting; what we don't talk about; how fast do we talk; speeches in literature; discovering word order, making rules unambiguous; scripting a character.

The common aims of all the units are to give both teachers and students 'a new awareness of what language is, and how it functions; the uses we make of it as individual human beings and as members of society; and what is done to us through the medium of language', and 'to offer procedure which require the student to use both spoken and written English under clearly defined conditions'. These common aims underlying the project and the carefully planned starting points provided in each unit make *Language in Use* an appropriate basis for a study of this approach to English teaching. It should be borne in mind, however, that the scheme of units is designed to be highly flexible in operation, and that the activities recommended in the units are open-ended. In order to familiarize members of the group with the nature of the project, a workshop is planned, in which members will be able to follow through part of a unit in the position of students.

Trial use of the project in schools and in colleges began in 1969-70. In the light of experience gained during the trial period a completely revised version of *Language in Use* has been prepared for publication. It is hoped that pre-publication copies of this revised version will be available for inspection at the conference. P. S. Doughty, chairman of the programme, will be taking part in the conference and will assist in our discussions.

for Further Education	F. Flower *Language and Education* (Longmans 1966) S. Bolt *The Right Response* (Hutchinson 1900)
for Colleges of Education	D. Holbrook *The Exploring Word*
General:	*The Use of English* Chatto and Windus (various articles) *English in Education* NATE/Oxford University Press

We hope to circulate a parallel list from N. American sources for the benefit of U.K. participants.

Originally *Language in Use* was concerned exclusively with the 16+ age group, but, in the course of classroom use, the team came to the conclusion that much of the material was suitable for a far wider age and ability range. A large proportion of the experimental work in secondary schools has since been done with groups under 16.

At the conference we shall concentrate on the experience of using units from the project in classes below the sixth form at Tulse Hill School. Tulse Hill is a boys' mixed ability school in South West London. Of its 1,800 pupils a high proportion come from working class areas, and about 30 percent are children of West Indian immigrants. Various members of the English department have used *Language in Use* regularly during and since the trial period. One of them, Keith Kimberley, will participate in discussion and comment on the material from the school.

As so much of the work suggested in the units involves talk and group work, the documentation will consist mainly of tape recorded lessons, together with any written work resulting from them. A video recording of lessons at Tulse Hill is planned. Recorded discussion by teachers from other schools where the project has been used, should also be available.

Questions which might arise in discussion are:

What kinds of connection are established with the rest of the work in English?
How far is *Language in Use* typical of 'separate treatment'?
Are there problems which all 'separate treatments' share?
Are there particular areas of English which need separate and timetabled attention?
Does this approach define the role of the teacher in a particular way?
Does it demand more specialist expertise?
Is the advantage of this kind of work its potentiality for coherent planning?
Can this approach accommodate pupils' own interests and enthusiasms?

Group 5

The 'English syllabus' in most English schools is a curious document. It very bravely spells out explicitly who should be doing what but is often a statement of aspirations supplemented with practical information (like availability of texts and equipment) and the allocation of certain themes to certain year groups. It is often ignored. Judging from certain American documents we have had a chance to examine some American schools are, by contrast, minutely specific, whole booklets being devoted to the programme of work for a single group for six months. The 'Behavioural objectives' movement (see Maxwell and Tovatt, *Behavoural Objectives in English*, NCTE) has possibly strengthened this tendency. For these reasons we have relied on our transatlantic colleagues to provide the discussion material for the work of this group. We shall supplement it with a dialogue on syllabus-making by two members who have recently been appointed Heads of Department and have had to face up to the problem (though they have solved it in very different ways). These are the questions we want to take a look at.

How is the complete detailed plan arrived at ?
Is it important, or crucial, for pupils to understand the plan and/or its objectives?
Does a complete plan guarantee completeness?
Can such a scheme be operated with mixed ability groups? How does it accommodate different rates of development and differing personalities?
What is the relevance of pupil interest and cultivation?
What does the teacher teach?

Must the teacher have unwavering belief in his objectives in order to operate a scheme of this sort?

A last word

We look forward to meeting members of our Commission. May we ask you to do something for us? *If you have material which is relevant to the work of our commission, don't hesitate to bring it.* We'll do our best to get in in. This is especially addressed to our transatlantic colleagues.

Time-Table : Commission 2

Sunday	18	July	1.30 – 3.00 p.m.	Opening Speaker & brief discussion
			3.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Groups – Common core
			4.30 – 6.30 p.m.	Groups – Common core
Monday	19	July	9.15 – 12.00 noon	Groups – Common core

GROUPS – CHOICE A

Monday	19	July	8.00 – 9.30 p.m.	Groups – Choice A
Tuesday	20	July	9.15 –12.00 noon	Groups – Choice A
Wednesday	21	July	9.15 –12.00 noon	Groups – Choice A
			1.30 – 4.00 p.m.	Groups – Choice A

GROUPS – CHOICE B

Thursday	22	July	9.15 – 12.00 noon	Groups – Choice B
			1.30 – 4.00 p.m.	Groups – Choice B
			8.00 – 9.30 p.m.	Groups – Choice B
Friday	23	July	9.15 – 12.00 noon	Group – Choice B
Saturday	24	July	1.30 – 4.00 p.m.	Commission Plenary : Co-Chairman

York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

Commission Three

Chairman: Mrs Winifred Fawcus, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Co-Chairmen: Patricia Browne, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Charlotte Huck, Reading Centre, Ohio State University

Commission 3

Study group options Please tick 1st and 2nd choices.

		1st choice	2nd choice
1.	The younger child in school (4+ – 7+)		
2.	Reading – process, content and response		
3.	Drama and language		
4.	Poetry for children and children as poets		
5.	Talking and discussion		
6.	Writing about what, for whom and why		
7.	Childrens' literature		

Name
Address

Please tick above appropriate association.

Organization NCTE MLAA CCTE NATE

The completed form should be returned to Co-Chairman as follows:

Members of NCTE) Prof Charlotte Huck
or MLAA)
Reading Center
Ohio State University
29 W. Woodruff
Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA

CCTE Prof Patricia Browne
Department of Elementary Education
Faculty of Education
The University of Alberta
Edmonton 7, Alberta,
Canada

NATE Mrs Winifred Fawcus
University of Newcastle
Institute of Education
St Thomas' Street
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU

We should be most grateful if we could have the information by 15 June 1971.

Information

Events for full conference

Saturday	July 17	4.30 p.m.	Registration; Tea
		5.30 p.m.	Reception; Opening of Exhibition
		8.00 p.m.	Plenary Session: Mr Van Straubenzee (DES)
Sunday	July 18	8.00 p.m.	Plenary Session: Jim Squire
Wednesday	July 21	8.00 p.m.	Lord Mayor's Reception
Friday	July 23	8.00 p.m.	Buffet and entertainment
Saturday	July 24	9.15 a.m.	Plenary overview

Commission 3

Detailed timetables will be available at the Conference. This is a general plan.

The full commission will meet:

Sunday	July 18	1.30 – 4.00 p.m.
Monday	July 19	9.15 – 12 noon
Wednesday	July 21	9.15 – 12 noon
Thursday	July 22	9.15 – 12 noon
Friday	July 23	1.30 – 4.00 p.m.

for talks followed by discussion to illustrate attempts to answer questions posed by the teacher's concern with:

The mother tongue
Variety and validity of attempts to develop *use* of language in school
Developing precision
Experience and opportunity

Monday	July 19	8.00 p.m.	*Children talking* Tapes and findings from a Staffordshire team.
Thursday	July 22	8.00 p.m.	Films and video tapes: Teachers and children at work

Study group sessions

Sunday	July 18	4.30 p.m.	
Wednesday	July 21	1.30 p.m.	
Thursday	July 22	1.30 p.m.	
Friday	July 23	9.15 a.m.	If not attending an Ad hoc Discussion group.

In general these sessions last 2+ hours. The first meeting may be shorter.
The time of the evening meal is not yet fixed.

Options:

The younger child in school (4+ – 7+)
Reading – process, content and response
Drama and language
Poetry for children and children as poets
Talking and discussion
Writing about what, for whom and how
Childrens literature

School visits.

Tuesday	July 20	9.15	onwards. When it is hoped to provide opportunity for all Commission members to visit a primary school in the West or East Riding. It is planned to hire coaches to drop off small groups at schools within reasonable distance of YORK.

A 7 year old in response to her teacher's invitation to talk after the child's friend had delivered a graphic account of a visit she had made.
'I 'avent got nowt to say. It 'asn't 'appened yet.'

11 year olds in discussion with the teacher whom they had just left:

Alice 'I write because its a sort of emptying out of all that I've thought and I can remember what I've thought because it is on paper.'
'I add thinks to myself when I write. I don't take them out, I add them. Really I'm adding a new idea . . . .'

Caroline 'At school, I'm adding a new idea, but at home, I'm really thinking about what I've . . . at home, I sort of meditate upon it before I write it down.'

Alice 'I have my doubts about being good at English when I see what Miss A's done to my book with all her red ink. I hate it. It makes such a mess.'

Joanna 'I couldn't care less whether they said it was good or bad, but I'd like to know what they *thought* about it.'

An Australian boy 12 years old:

The adults don't understand us
They think
We're childish
No one can get in
our world
It has a wall twenty-feet high
and adults
have only ten feet ladders.

Rose Falconer in B. Thompson (Collector and editor) *Once around the sun* An anthology of Poetry by Australian Children. OUP Melbourne 1966.

The contents of this brochure have been designed with a two-fold purpose; first, to encourage pre-conference thinking about some of the problems at issue, and secondly, to outline possible procedures in study groups, questions which might be raised and pre-conference activity of intending participants. It is hoped that members of Commission 3 will decide beforehand which study group they would prefer to join (a separate slip is enclosed). It might still be possible to arrange a time for small groups to discuss topics not outlined here, if these are made known to co-chairmen before or during the conference.

The primary/elementary school is in a continuous process of evolving its purposes and practices. There is a wide divergence of opinion as to what these may be on both sides of the Atlantic, but always, because teachers in primary/elementary schools teach across the curriculum, they remain central to opportunities provided for childrens' language and learning in their schools and classrooms. In this commission we are attempting to ask ourselves questions

which teachers must ask if they are to find their way through the barrage of advice offered by professionals from many facets of education, and the profusion of aids and published materials which confront us daily, to know more about what we ask for and how we ask it from children, and with what means and how they respond to our demands in terms of language usage and quality of learning.

The following quotations display a variety of attitudes on the part of grown-ups and children. How far does our questioning lend support or otherwise to any of them?

Most people do not realize an elementary truth that was repeatedly brought up at the seminar (Dartmouth, USA 1966). The child masters the basic structure of his language by the age of five before he enters school . . . .

In a second of talking a child obeys five or six rules, and he makes only about one mistake in ten seconds.

Then the trouble begins. The teacher may seize on that mistake beginning to shatter the child's confidence without realizing how much he has mastered by himself. As the child goes on in school, the problem becomes more difficult. He has to grow more conscious of his language, learn much more about how to use it. But need he be conscious of all the rules that teachers usually try to drill into him?

Herbert J. Muller *The uses of English*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1967

All children need to be given the tools of their trade before they can competently work . . . .

How can a child find out everything for itself? e.g. I could not possibly dovetail two pieces of wood together unless I had been told exactly how to do it. How can a child join two phrases into a complete sentence?

G. F. Browne, 'Notes from a Junior School Headmaster in C. B. Cox and A. E. Dyson (eds) *Black Paper One* 1969

'Reading' as practised in most elementary schools is in essence mechanical instruction in unmotivated decoding or translation, the aim and savour of which is lost on all but those happy few who learn elsewhere the real romance of all those little marks on paper. Writing is similarly mechanical for the most part, in which spelling, sentences and paragraphs are valued but not the intent of a child's potential for fresh and vivid communication about his own world. Our schools predominantly neglect the concrete stimuli to thoughtful and imaginative communication which could be the context for strongly-motivated reading and writing.

David Hawkins *Outlook 1* Winter 1970 Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, University of Colorado.

. . . A reading corner with good and exciting books will hardly lower anyone's score on the formal tests, and there and there it will dramatically liberate a child who goes to it with fossils to identify, and who stays, reads and writes a 'book' about where his fossils were found. He stays because the corner is valued. He learns something about books that is not in books – that they are his home and not, as so often is the case, enemy territory.

David Hawkins *op. cit.*

Whilst always acknowledging that it is the content of creative writing which is of primary importance, the teacher must also help the child to become literate. Written expression has to be recorded in understandable form and

the teacher must recognize the need for combining creative freedom with controlled presentation of material. At no time should misspelt, badly written work be considered to be comparable with that of work of equal content which is correctly produced.
S. M. Lane and M. Kemp *An approach to creative writing in the Primary School* Blackie 1967

I want the piece to come out of the loud speaker, into the ears of the child, then sink down and stimulate reaction from the accumulated experience there that will spark off a new piece of writing; not a copy, but the child's own. The poems the children write are the instinctive response of their own consciousness: for writing, to be true must reflect the life and nature of the writer, a child's life and nature, and for this reason must be regarded as a professional job.
Moira F. Doolan, Speaking about her *Listening and Writing* series in the BBC Schools Broadcasting Service Quoted by N. C. Martin, 'Presenting Poetry' *Handbook for English Teachers* Methuen 1966

. . . We should not try to impose techniques, but free the channels for the imagination to impose its own form on the writing.
N. C. Martin 'Presenting Poetry' *Handbook for English Teachers* Methuen 1966

Suggestions for pre-conference reading

James Britton *Language and Learning* Allen Lane the Penguin Press 1970
M. M. Lewis *Language and the child* NFER 1969
K. Chukovsky (Trans. Miriam Morton) *From two to five* Univ of California Press 1963
Ruth Weir *Language in the crib* Mouton 1962
John Holt *How children fail* Pitman (1965) Penguin 1969
Alec Clegg *The excitement of writing* Chatto and Windus 1964
Marjorie Hourd and Geraldine Cooper *Coming into their own* Heinemann 1959
Andrew Wilkinson *Spoken English* University of Birmingham 1965
Anthony Jones and June Buttery *Children and Stories* Basil Blackwell 1970
Roger Brown and Ursula Bellugi 'Three Processes in the child's qcquisition of Syntax' in E. H. Lenneberg (ed) *New directions for the study of Language* MIT Press 1964
Joseph Church *Language and the discovery of reality* Random House 1961
L. S. Vygotsky (Trans. Hanfmann and Vakar) *Thought and Language* MIT Press

This list has been kept short. There will be opportunities at the conference to browse among a wide selection of books. We hope too that members will exchange information about books which have proved valuable to them.

Connie Rosen is Director of the Schools Council Project on Language Development in The Primary School. In connection with the project begun in September 1969, she has seen teachers and children at work in a great variety of primary schools throughout the United Kingdom. In this paper she offers for consideration, the strands which to her appear to operate for successful language and learning in what are termed open plan classrooms and which are slowly growing more common. The strands may not be exclusive to the open plan concept, but it is possible that they are more clearly recognizable in such an organization.

Language Opportunities Created by the Open Classroom

Connie Rosen

So much has been written about primary school work recently and there has been so much attention to its achievements or its failures, and the whole thing has been so clouded by words like integrated day, team teaching and open plan classrooms, structure, programme, freedom, activities, discovery, that we are in danger of forgetting about its really important achievements. Oddly enough the people who seem to know most about it and who are the most skilled and sensitive in running the schools, rarely use these words.

What does distinguish most primary schools from secondary schools is that the primary school creates its own particular kind of shared life from the human beings who inhabit the school.

It is the *scale* of most primary schools which is potentially their greatest advantage. They can be almost domestic in their ways of living and so become a very satisfactory transition from private to public for young children. For its own purposes the primary school can have the best of both worlds, both the warmth, the intimacy and the promise of new explorations, both the welcoming acceptance and the wider circle of others. But to say that a school has an integrated day tells us nothing about this. At any rate it tells us very little about the particular world being established, how the people in it talk to one another, the messages they send and how they are received and what is distinctive about the adult's voice when it enters the conversation.

There may be no list of rules, no explicit code of conduct but some kind of writ runs, some patterns of acceptable behaviour grow, change and become more or less established. One of the most important of these, important because it exerts so much influence on the others, is how all the human beings within the school and its difference from home create a special kind of language nurturing what has already developed and also saying new kinds of things in new ways. If primary schools have changed remarkably in a few decades it is partly because they have found a new voice, a voice which can make itself heard because the context fosters it, waxes it into being and confirms it. I heard this voice again and again in the schools.

It would be unrealistic for me to attempt to describe the many features that go to creat a successful open classroom. Apart from the consideration of whether such a task is indeed feasible, I am committed to a particular consideration of the language opportunities created by the open classroom.

I must, therefore, concentrate on following just a few of the strands in the rope. It would certainly be more true of the infant school than of the junior school that infant teachers are on the whole much more ready to accept the

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fact that children find their own ways of learning. Many more teachers of the five to seven year olds are likely to see the value of children playing, dressing up, making things, painting, modelling and the children's need to move, to dance and to create musical rhythms and patterns. It is therefore, not unusual to find anything like the following conversation, overheard and recorded by the teacher, issuing from the home corner. The conversation is not verbatim. She recorded it by hand.

You gonna be a lady like me?
A skirt and a bow.
This is the skirt its got a bow at the back.
I'm getting married.
You've got a mini skirt, don't matter.
You'll have that on in a minute if you don't hurry up and shut up.
You're too much of a . . . . Can I have this and can I have that and can I have this and can I have that?. . .
Do you like that?
Er. . . .
I don't want this one.
I've got a belt.
Alright can I have a belt?

This is my boyfriend.
Is this your Mum?
No you're my wicked Dad. You're my step Mummy.
Come along dear.
Come on, come and see your boyfriend.

What would you like darling?
It's closing up time.
It's morning, it's open.
Yes madam, madam yes?
Have you got a red dress?
How much please?
Eight bob.
Oh. That's very much'nt it?
Let's try it on. Come on let's go and try it on.
Have you got my red dress?
Next one please.
How much is this red dress?
Eight bob, you can try it on.
Closing time . . . .
Morning. . . .
I'm mother.
I am an' all – we're all mother.
I'm not a little girl I'm a nanny.
Get out of the shop Julie. You're messing all the things up.
You aren't playing. Don't let Julie play.

On the one hand, it is a conversation of children at play that one might hear at any time in most homes. What the school situation provides is a wider circle of children to play with, indeed the very opportunity to play. Again it has unfortunately become one of the sad facts of modern living that many young

children in tall blocks of flats may spend most of the day indoors in very cramped and inhibiting circumstances and robbed of the opportunity to meet and play with other children. Teachers will say of such children that they have to learn to play. (The children playing the game of dressing up and shopping do live very much on the ground and the reader with a keen ear or eye may be able to detect the background of the children).

In learning to play with each other and in meeting such a diversity of personalities, they also have to learn the difficulties of adjustment to each other.

As Frances, aged 6 explanis, 'My sister has short hair and a big face and my sister never plays with me and when she does play with me she never plays the way I want to play.'

Children will indeed accept difference in children and trust the teacher to do so. They do not resent the teacher making different kinds of concessions to different children. The formation of the group culture in the classroom developing its own way of life also allows for individual idiosyncrasies and deviant behaviour.

It may not always be understood by young children, but the effort to help them to do so is surely a worth-while educational aim. I am not saying and-they-all-lived-happily ever after but I am saying that it is valuable to have problems of this kind for they do not appear to arise in classrooms of a different kind where discourse follows a different pattern. Confrontations and collisions between children are a fact of childhood as any playground will show. But if school calls for special kinds of cooperative endeavour, it also makes possible the learning of new strategies in the resolving of conflict. The language of reconciliation or at least of making explicit differences can grow out of such situations. This is very different from the language of obedience.

The young children playing on their own were finding their own ways of learning to live with each other and getting to know one another. Teachers create opportunities for children to meet each other and to work things out for themselves, but they may also discuss things with the children in a more conscious way. This is not the kind of talk about loving one another and not hurting people and issuing little moral slogans about it, but the kind of talk that preceded the following two pieces of writing. They come from two different teachers. The first piece about people's differences originated with a broadcast on the origins of man, thus the curious note about 'the ancestors'. I don't think David has quite understood what began it all, but he has thought about the conversation that followed the broadcast about each one being different.

> People are very intelligent, they are our ancestors. Some people are very fiddly with their trousers and some people sit in a funny way. Some people sit with their bottoms in the air and other people swing on their chair and fall off them. And poke their bottoms out of the back of the chair. Some other people sit on the very edge of their chair.
>
> David 8

The second piece of writing arose from the teacher reading to the class an extract from *The Human Ape* by Morris, and again judging from the variety of writing that followed, the talk ranged across the variety of human behaviour, Andrew thought about the child who is teased by others and had tried to consider how this had come about.

John

> When he plays football people kick his ball under the hut, and he can't fend for himself very well to. And bigger boys push him about. And he can't run very fast to. He's a bit chuby as well.
>
> Andrew 9½ years

I would have said that the question of acceptance and understanding by the group and the community is a very fundamental one to human beings and particularly important in a society such as ours which fragments and disrupts permanent and stable relationships. A friend of mine who runs a playgroup described how a newcomer arrived who had her own system of dealing with the situation. She stayed by the wall just looking at the scene before her. She did come to school, did not cry or ask for her mother, but just stood by the wall looking. The teachers and helpers thought it best to leave her there, and it took a whole term before this child was ready to leave the security of the wall and to venture forth. She did this quite suddenly one day, by walking into the middle of the room, helping herself to an overall, paints, easel and paper and began painting. She was perfecly alright after that and fully at ease with the other children. She obviously needed time to learn the situation, to get the picture of it all in her head, and to see how the human beings in this room conducted themselves and what it was they were doing. It is an example of what I mean by teachers knowing that children do have their own ways of learning. No-one could have predicted that this was this child's way of learning how to cope with the playgroup or to have foretold that it would have taken that amount of time to do it.

This is an example of the adults accepting the child's behaviour, interpreting and sensing that she needed to be left alone to come to terms with the problems, and giving her time to do it. I would have said that this too is another of those strands that I am trying to trace in the open classroom, i.e. allowing for individual differences, not only in social adjustments, but individual differences in all ways, giving children time to develop thoughts, ideas, systems of work and learning situations of their own, and giving them time to do it.

It stands to reason that a school that puts its emphasis on children learning for themselves and not on continuous teacher surveillance and programming is likely to deal with individual rates of development much more than a subject oriented school. I think it is unlikely that the two children who carried out the following investigation on Speed would have done so if time and opportunity had not been created for them in an open school, and if it had not been made clear to them that investigations and enquiries of that kind were acceptable and encouraged. Other children in the class were doing different things, but they no doubt saw Neil and John conducting their investigation, had chats with them about it, and some may indeed have imitated it for themselves.

It is wise to remember that young children have a curiosity and an urge to find out about the world; it may be that the range of their curiosities has been narrowed by a lack of confidence or even a lack of awareness of the richness of opportunities. But it is not enought to say that children are curious. It is also the business of the school to arouse curiosity and to create a sense of enquiry.

John and Neil as the following record shows, have enlarged what could easily have been an ephemeral interest into a joint and more durable enquiry.

Speed

1 A car gos fast and it gets ther much cwicer than a beetle can and a beetle gos much slower than a car can.
2 A motor bacye is very fast and a beetle is slow. A motor bacye can go 90 miles and a beetle can go no mals and a beetle is black and a beetle has 8 legs.
3 John and me went rasing first I went and I took two minuts and then John had a go and he got 2 and harf minits and then I had another time and I took one and 1 harf and one cwerter and I won.
4 An aeroplane is a very fast think, but a tortoise is slow a aeroplane can go 100 miles in 2 hours and a tortoise can go a mal in 4 hours and a aeroplane can go a mile in a minit.
5 A rabit is a very fast thing But a ladybird is slow, a rabit can go a mile in ten minutes and a ladybird can go a mile in a quarter of an hour.
6 How long does it taek to walk down the corridor:

	John	Neil
1 corridor) All round)	3 quarters of a minit	3 quarters of a minit
Straight	2 quarters harf a minute	10 secs harf a minute
John lost Neil won		
		John and Neil 8 years

I do not see how in a very tightly timetabled situation, the innumerable examples I have seen of children following an interest of their own could possibly have been done or even contemplated. I am thinking of the two ten year old boys who had found a log on their way to school, had tottered into school with it, and had explained to their teacher that they wanted to prove something. On being asked what they were going to prove, they said they were going to call their enquiry 'The Dead Log', but what they were going to prove was that it was Not dead.
Then they set to, carefully taking it apart, examining pieces of it under the microscope and with a magnifying glass, to find all the bugs and creatures that dwelt in it. They recorded what they found, described their findings, and made a diagram of the log to show where the creatures had been found. In the same way an eleven year old had taken an old telephone to school and with some friends had taken the telephone to pieces, bit by bit, and then recorded in diagram and with explanation how one piece connected with another, and how the apparatus worked. Perhaps the following example of Christopher's book on his tortoise would be of interest to teachers. The book was entirely his own idea, each item is of his own choosing, and the whole thing was very carefully set out with diagrams and drawings. In such circumstances one is permitted a small glance at a 'thought' and the different aspects of the tortoise that are considered, the manner of dealing with it and the influences that one may detect from conversation and from reading are important parts of the 'thought'.

Entry 1
Tortioses
I have two tortioses thay are named Jack and Jill. I put out four lettice leaves every morning. Then when I get home from school I let them out for a stroll. They love eating just the yellow flower of the buttercup, and they also eat only the move of the clover. People always think that tortioses struggle along very slowly. Jack and Jill always move quite steadily when the sun gose in they are amidiadly back in their hutch. They also like walking out in the rian.
(picture of tortiose in the rain)

Entry 2
Food
Jack and Jill eat four lettice leaves a day. I also let them out for a walk on the vegitable patch witch has lots of clover on it. Sometimes they dont get up all day so I dont feed them. They eat anything like apple, carrot, cucumber, lettice, cabbige or dandy lion leaves. One thing they really adore is mixed salad, with lots of tomatoes in if. They have no teeth. They also riqire water.
(Picture of a tomato, Jill trying to get out of her cage, and Jack just waking up).

School is the meeting place of the private and the public, the individual and the group, of the children and the adult. The open classroom not only welcomes the children and their own ways of thinking and feeling, but it also creates a life of its own. It creates a context for living. I think this is another important strand in the affair. This context is created by the shared experiences, and they may be provided by the teacher with the materials, the books, the apparatus or they may be provided by the children. Every institution creates its own folk-lore but in a good primary school so far from being driven underground it is nurtured.

It is difficult to asses quite how important this is , but for a five year old to pick a poppy on the way to school and for this poppy to become an item of interest in the classroom, to be talked about or painted by some of the children is a contribution to this child's discovery of himself. The following is an example of a child contributing to the life of the classroom, Mark aged 10 tells the story of how he discovered a bone in the woods and what he did about it.

The Bone

One night when I was at scouts and we were playing outside in the woods I came upon a bone. The bone was shaped like a sword that the turks used to use. It was not the end of scouts yet so as I played the game on with the bone in my hand. When the game was over I ran back to the wall to ask our scout leader if he knew what the bone was and what it came from. He said he thought it came from a cow or a horse but did not know where about it came from the body. When scouts had finished I got some sweets from the tuck shop and started off home with the bone. Just as I was getting out Alan came rushing out and said, 'I heard you wanted to find out what that bone was'. He told me that it was a horse's rib, he also said how it got there. About three years ago there was a old lady who lived near the wood and who had three horses and six dogs. She loved the horses but not

the dogs. She never fed the dogs so the beasts got so savage that they began eating the horses. Soon all the horses were dead and so the old lady grew so angry that she killed all her dogs. After, she realized that all her friends were dead so she committed suicide.

Mark 10 years

By the time I arrived in the classroom, the interest had obviously been taken up by other children. Mark's account was on the wall. On a table in front of it were a collection of bones, including Mark's which had all been labelled by the children, and on the wall were drawings of the bones, diagrams of the skeletons of a horse, a dog, and other creatures whose bones had been found. These were all carefully labelled and other children had written accounts of where they'd found the bones and how they had identified them. A collection of a few books on anatomy were to hand to help the children in their identification. From one child's personal discovery and curiosity, others had become interested and joined in the investigation. As may be guessed, this was by no means a rare occurrence in this classroom, as other children engaged in an observation of two bird tables which had been placed at different levels outside the classroom windows and had recorded their observations in writing and drawing in the same way as the 'Bone Group'.

When a school creates this kind of living context a delicate web of relationship is established which is as complicated as that in any home. As complicated but different for it creates new possibilities, new speculations, new styles. It is out of these novel features in the situation that language can develop, for activities which are different in quality, which lure the children to think and behave in new ways, also prompt them to reach out in language and take hold of more of the resources available to them.

Apparently small-scale and random events like bringing a poppy or bones as well as teacher-initiated bird tables and visits all make their contribution.

There is the eternal dog that wanders round Primary school classrooms frightening the smallest children, interfering with their games or being patted and encouraged by others. I have never known a Primary school yet that hasn't at some time in its history possessed a stray dog that turns up at playtime. Here are a group of eleven year olds discussing the matter.

P1 I think this dog, this dog that's been botheringus a lot at school – I think most of the fault is with the kitchen ladies because when they see the dog hanging around the back they always feed it and this encourages it to come back.

P4 Well how do you know they do? Have you seen it or what?
P1 Because. . . .
P4 Because what they do is they empty all the food out into the distbins you see and the dog's always round there so they throw titbits out there and they just come back time after time. . . .
P3 And they expect to have more every time they come, don't they?
P4 Yes, but I think that dog – I think Jason's – it is neglected –
P1 You know Jason – he gets left out every day – he wanders the whole day and then comes back and he's not allowed to come in.

P4 Yes, I know, but do you think that's right?
P1 No. No. It's cruel to let them wander.

P3 Oh yes,. . . erm but back to the dog in the field I think that if this poor dog's been rejected and you tell by his sort of his face it's hollow
P4 Yes
P3 I don't think he gets much to eat I, you know. . ..
P4 No 'cos as soon as you put your hand on him you can feel that there's hardly any skins on his ribs
P3 And I think he's all ribby – sometimes when a dog comes into the playground sometimes the people who don't know better, they chase it and the poor thing gets so excited that if it turns round and barks at them they'd think 'Oh why is it barking at me, why is it barking at me?' You know (laughter)
P4 Yes, and then they'd chase it all the more.
P3 Sort of, if it turns round and gives them a slight nip– 'Oh what I have done to get that? Oh the cruel horrible thing!'
P2 They'd go and more or less kick it.
P3 And they'd go on, you know, 'I didn't do anything to the dog and it came up and bit me . . . there's something wrong with it, it's mad you know.'
P4 Yes, it's got the rabies.
P3 . . . which is a favourite rumour. . . .
P2 I feel if the dog isn't yours you can pat it on the head, but you don't keep on doing this or it's going to come back to you all the more and you know, if you keep on doing this – he's going to start neglecting himself.
P4 Yes, well 'em – I think you mean neglecting his owner.
P3 Yes
P4 I think you shouldn't really – ' em sort of feed a dog or do anything to it unless you've got the owner's permission to look after it or it's your dog.
P2 Yes – exactly.
P3 I think it's not fair if you feed somebody else's dog.
P2 Yes . . . mm (pause).
P5 You should leave it alone because if you feed it, they'll want your food and they might not want their owner's.

This extract is taken from a tape transcript of a group of 11 year olds from a working class housing estate. They were talking about animals and no teacher was present. The school has made these children comfortable with each other, so comfortable in fact that the five of them can in an invisible way keep the situation sufficiently controlled (that magic word 'control!') to enable them to use language as a means of rational investigation and exchange. There is a powerful sense not only of the children's awareness of cause and effect but also that causes are complicated. This sense is made explicit by the language structures, they have by the end of their time in this school been enabled to acquire, as an analysis of the last sentence will show. It is notable that the children are not only disciplined in their attention to each other but this attention is the essential prerequisite to their disciplined relevance as they pursue their theme.

What I am trying to stress is that the easy flow of such talk is not fortuitous, nor could it possibly be conjured into being for a special performance. In the years which preceded it sensitive teachers have participated in a thousand ways to make it possible and not simply by 'allowing children to talk'. The following transcript of a teacher talking with a small group of children in an infant school may serve as an illustration of this interaction between adult and children. It occurred in a 'family group' classroom of five to seven year olds in a two teacher village school. The children's parents are mostly agricultural labourers and claypit workers.

Witheridge County Primary School
Witheridge, Tiverton, Devon.

T = Teacher D = Debbie P = pupil

T	That is Auntie Alice, is it?
D	Yes.
T	When was that taken Debbie?
D	I don't know, I expect it was a long time ago.
T	What time of the year was that? Do any of you know?
P	No spring.
D	This is another one of my baby, she was crying there and there's the house where we used to live. Here's some other. . .
T	Pardon?
D	Here's some little photos.
T	Yes. (Interruption)
P	Where's the Evostick that we used. . . (not clear). . . with the sellotape but is'nt in the cupboard.
T	Is'nt it? Perhaps Mary's had it. Who had it last?
P	We did (Background noise here makes tape undecipherable) T Trace them. . . .
P	Trace them and cut them out – oh I see trace them. . . .
P	(Reading her work) 'On Sunday my godfather and grandad came to tea and went on the fields.)
T	Yes, can you see what you've done with the word 'on'? What have you done?
P2	Yes, no Saturday or is it Sunday?
T	What have you done with it?
P	I have got 'No'.
T	How would you make it 'on'.
P	(Spelling) O – N.
T	And what is this?
P	God.
T	And what have you written?
P	Good.
T	And how are you going to change that?
P	Rub out one of the 'O's.
T	Yes very nice. What are these things?
Ps	Chairs.
T	Oh I see – you wanted to get the table. . . . (lost the words here) I expect you had a good tea on Sunday, did you?
P1	Yes
P2	That's a very good drawing. Mmm. . . .

T Do you know what this is about?
P No, (reading) 'Yesterday I helped Daddy make a cupboard to keep the clothes inside'.
P Who is this? You? Who are the other people then?
P No. (words indistinct) that's Daddy and that's Grandad and there's the nails. (laughter)
T What are the nails for?
P For putting in the fence to keep it all together.
T Oh I see. You use nails or screws?
T Did you?
P Yes we've got four great boxes of them.
T Have you, where did you get them?
P A man gave us them. . . .
T And what did you put the nails in with?
P Can I do some tracing – do you know where the tracing paper is?
T There should be some up in that big . . . . on the top shelf I think Come on J. . . . Read it.
J (reading) 'On Saturday Mummy and Daddy went to Exeter and Mummy brought Sharon a summer dress. Mummy and Daddy did'nt come home. . . and Mummy and Daddy didn't come home until quarter past eight o'clock and then Mummy and Daddy and Sharon and I went home. On Sunday Mummy and Daddy and Sharon and I went to Church and then we come home.'
T Came
J Came. Oh came.
T How are you going to change it?
P I know use. . . .
T No she doesn't. Why doesn't she need a rubber?
P Because you just add a bit of a tail.
T Yes, she could. Thank you. Did you not think of that?
T We'll see those presently Debbie.
P (interrupting) Miss. . I can't find that tracing paper?
T Oh I'll find it for you
Pause
T Have you decided what is going to be the corners of the castle?
P (Replies, explaining probably, but indecipherable)
T Yes, those are towers actually aren't they? (tape faint)
T Mm. I thought that one of the towers was fixed to the castle.
P Yes, but they broke it – someone.
T Oh. Perhaps you could think of a different way of fixing it so it would be a bit. . . .
(Lots of noises now on tape of children playing – including music etc)

End of this section of tape.

Then follows teacher reading a story about a trip to the seaside by train – with appropriate sound of the journey.
The arrival at the sea and the meeting with a mermaid, who invites them down into the sea (more music and sounds). These are being made by teacher and children. After this teacher gets the children to make the noise of a train with various instruments.

Later)

Can I have that one?
T I think Katharine could have a turn for a little while, don't you?
Here you are Michael. Susan you are lost behind there, aren't you?

Are you coming in closer?
P I've finished now
Lots of disconnected words and small sentences here –
Children obviously engrossed in playing
T What can you see Ann?
A Everything is green
T Pardon? Why is everything is green?
P Because it's a green . . . I can see . . . .
P2 My face is yellow
T You're very quiet today Richard, aren't you?
P Your face is orange
Again disconnected remarks like: 'paper up there'
'your nose is orange' etc
One child humming to herself.
T Have you all washed your hands? (Lots of 'Yes, Yes!)
All ready for dinner? Would you pack these things? (*Yes. Yes*)
P Are we going to dinner?
T Yes you are, and where do you go after that?
P School again.
T After you have had your dinner what do you do?
P Go to school again.
T No.
P Dancing. Where do you got to dance?
T Do you and what sort of things do you do in there?
P Do side together.
T Doing side together, What's your teacher called?
P2 Mrs. . . . . Is a voice going to come out of that thing?
T We'll have to see this afternoon.

This gives some inkling of how such a teacher turns into a reality that educational cliche, the development of individuals, for in this classroom with its varied concurrent activities the teacher somehow finds time to accord to each child attention, help and respect. But of course the children are not islands. Their development, their sense of themselves has its social component which the teacher fosters by her tone and attitude towards them.

"I think Katherine could have a turn for a little while don't you? Here you are Michael. Susan you are lost behind there, aren't you? Are you coming in closer?"

This is a mere sample of scraps of conversation in the course of one morning taken in an infant school classroom. It is a small country school and the teacher knows the children, their homes and the area fairly intimately.

Debbie is showing her some photographs and the teacher recognizes Auntie Alice. She pays attention to the photographs, to what another child has written and helps him with his spellings, asks questions about the picture and what the writing is about. In between all this she attends to other children who need Evostick and tracing paper, and in fact has to go off and find the tracing paper for the child who needs it. She is shown the model of the castle and asks, 'Have you decided what is going to be the corners of the castle?' She suggests that the child might think of a different way of solving the problem of fixing the towers as the previous ones were broken off. The morning continues with story and music played by the children, some examination of coloured cellophane

paper, getting them ready for lunch and checking to make sure they know how the day is going to proceed. And this goes on all through the day and every day. She remains and many, many others like her, good-humoured, cheerful, interested in the children, and concerned about her role as a teacher.
She was rather perturbed when she gave me the tape, of the number of times she had intervened and felt sorry about all the questions she had been asking the children. It doesn't on its own do justice to her demeanour towards the children but I must say that what the tape shows is that when she *does* intervene she is always encouraging children to make decisions and choices for themselves.

The teachers in this village school and in others I visited felt that the children lived rather isolated lives. Many of them went home to isolated farms and cottages and saw no one other than their own families at the end of the school day. The teachers felt that this affected their language development. I could only say that the children showed not the slightest shyness or timidity towards me, a complete stranger to their classroom. I had no sooner sat down than I was surrounded by a group of children asking me about myself and where I'd come from. They exchanged their classroom and showed me their paintings and models and story books. This was a small two teacher village school and though the teachers may be right in their own observations of the children's lives, what I must record is that children in such circumstances would not have been as friendly or as forthcoming to a stranger even ten years ago. It is also probably true that a good village primary school with its family atmosphere, with the closeness of teachers and community and its mixture of age grouping probably achieves a great deal more for children than a large city school in a slum area. It just is a fact that young children need precisely the kind of ingredients that a good village school has to offer and the younger the children the more true this is.

It is the teacher who creates the possibilities for the network of relationship I have described to take place. She is responsible for creating new opportunities that the children themselves would never consider. All this is true and yet the quality of so many good teachers I have met is unobtrusiveness. One scarcely knows where they are in the classroom, especially as so many have discarded a desk of their own. I think the concept of a teacher holding the centre of the stage, indulging in histrionic performances and feats of skill with the chalk on the blackboard, is out of tune in today's schools. The nature of the influence of a good teacher in such a varied and ever-changing pattern is a very interesting puzzle.
Perhaps the following incident might help to illustrate what I mean.

It took place in an infant school classroom, with a mixed age group of five, six and seven year olds. At about twenty to twelve the teacher took a stool and a book and sat down in the middle of the classroom. The children nearest to her looked at her and began putting their things away and collecting round her. Gradually all over the classroom, children became aware of the growing knot round the teacher. They joined in the clearing away and coming to the circle. A group of children had been playing on the terrace just outside the classroom. One of them in a bus conductor's hat put his head round the door, said, 'She's read!' and the rest of the bus crew immediately set to, clearing away bricks and toys with great haste and they came to join the rest. Throughout the whole of this, the teacher had said not a word. The children were obviously used to this little ritual, but that's still no guarantee that young children absorbed

in play will always remember or be so conscientious in clearing up. She said nothing, had no need to chivvy or chide anyone and remained waiting in good faith that the job would be done. And so it was. They had all collected round her to hear the story and then to get ready for lunch. I think she had a way of knowing and without even a gesture or word, her influence had spread in the classroom. There was a quiet and confidence about it all, about herself and about the children.

It has been fashionable for a long time to talk of 'classroom climate' as a decisive factor in learning and the same very limited experiments are cited again and again as evidence that a 'democratic' climate in the most desirable. Yet this seems to miss the point. The most successful classrooms are not ones ruled by majority decisions or their equivalents but ones which create a context in which a rich variety of language can flow with ease. For that to happen speakers must share a past, must share meanings, must have knowledge in common, must be able to make assumptions about each other and must have built their own network of conventions within which there is room for all those negotiations which language make possible, facilitates and fosters.

Is there a place for the traditional reading primer? Or should reading arise from children's needs, interests and knowledge? What are practical implications of the latter approach in a large class of young children?

In preparing teachers to work with younger children are there problems arising from the student teacher's own background, from the nature of knowledge to be acquired, and from differing criteria in schools as to what constitutes 'successful teaching' of language skills? How can these be identified and solved?

Suggested preliminary reading

M. Brearley, et al *Fundamentals in the First School* Blackwell 1970
M. Craft et al *Linking Home and School* Longmans 1967
J. W. B. Douglas, *The Home and the School* MacGibbon and Kee 1964
A. F. Halsey, et al *Education, Economy and Society* *(Article 24, B. Bernstein, 'Social Class and Linguistic Development') Collier-Macmillan 1961
D. Lawton, *Social Class, Language and Education* Routledge 1968
M. M. Lewis, *Language and the Child* N.F.E.R 1969
M. M. Lewis, *Language, Thought and Personality in Infancy and Early Childhood* Harrap 1963
A. R. Luria and F. Yudovich, *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child* Staples Press 1959
J. & E. Newson, *Four Years Old in an Urban Community* Geo. Allen & Unwin 1968
M. Young and P. McGeeney, *Learning Begins at Home* Routledge 1968

*It is hoped that copies of later (unpublished) articles by Bernstein will be available for the group to consider.

Study Group 2 Reading: Process Content and Response Leader Ronnie Morris

1 *Main concerns*
Discussion of the nature of the reading process.
Discussions of the acquisition of reading power.
Evaluation of materials.

2 *Workshop method*
Set lectures will be avoided but opportunities will be made available for informal contributions by guest speakers from other sections of the conference.

A multi-dimensional model will be exhibited showing a variety of gradients of advance in the acquisition of reading power. A collection of books, other materials and tests illustrating aspects of the model will be available.

Some opening remarks in explanation of the model will be offered as a starting point for a series of informal discussions and workshop activities.

The group will be challenged
(a) to criticize the model offered, to modify it and build alternatives.
(b) to examine and appraise the illustrative materials in reference to the varied objectives and teaching procedures exhibited in the model and suggested modifications.

3 *The Reading Labyrinth*
The model referred to in Section 2 may be conceived as a labyrinth or network of pathways, each path with its own characteristic form of advance. Thus, to take a very simple example, a clear-cut phonic approach could be shown as a path rising in steps of increasing command of phonic rules. This path, however, may march through territory that could constitute either an area of self-teaching

or one where maximum demands are made for the intervention and help of the teacher. Again, this approach could be strongly print-based or tied closely either to living speech or to writing. It could be in traditional orthography or some new alphabet or coding system. Moreover, the objective sought could be in terms of reading and instruction following a preliminary stage devoted exclusively to the mastery of decoding skills or it could have been planned from the start as 'development through reading' as well as 'development in reading'.

Other major paths, including a specially designed gradient in terms of diminution of context support, would also be shown, each path with its own diversifying features.

Combinations of objectives, gradients of advance and associated features would add to the complexity of the labyrinth.

Signposts along each path would warn of dangers, raise queries and direct to relevant sections of the exhibition of books, tests, and other materials.

4 *Process and response*

Evaluation of techniques and materials in the teaching of reading, if it is to be of real profit educationally, must constantly keep in mind the nature of the reader's response. Unless the printed word comes alive in the mind of a reader who has some use for the message, skill in reading is educationally sterile: the response of the reader must be studied no less than the process of reading and its content.

Study Group 3 Drama and Language Leader Tom Stabler

The drama study group will be concerned with the impact of improvised dramatic experience upon children's thought and language. From an examination of videotape, slides, film, taped recordings, written language and perhaps children at work, we hope to go some way towards assessing the nature and value of drama as a means of stimulating and expressing ideas, thoughts, feelings and observations in language form.

There will be ample scope for the consideration of all relevant issues and the group will be free to develop discussion in any direction. It is probable, however, that some of the more important issues will be raised by the following questions:

How far does drama appear to be a first-hand reflective experience?

To what extent can it be seen to integrate and shape experience in language terms?

What can be said about emotional involvement and its influence on content of expression and extension of language?

How far does involvement in drama encourage children's capacity for critical thought?

What effect on thought and language has maturation of role and increased sensitivity to the roles of others? Is this to be seen in wider or deeper exploration of issues involved in the drama?

How far are children able to abstract from dramatic experience so that they are able to handle the issues and concepts in language?

Study Group 1 The younger child at school Leader Lesley Webb

Four main areas of concern to teachers of younger children might be the determinants of language, the functions of language, the kind and degree of adult intervention likely to further children's command of language, and (as extension of the last) kinds of organization, curriculum and provision presented by the school. It is apparent that these areas are closely interrelated. It is hoped that appreciation of this interrelation will give rise to exchange of ideas about young children's needs in regard to language and teachers' means of meeting them successfully.

It is envisaged that the study group will proceed by way of discussion based on film, tape and slides and by consideration of children's work in school, but will also visit nursery school (or class) and infants school and make subsequent critical assessment of activities observed. The presentation of individual group members' own examples of young children's language, their research, or their experience in schools or colleges is anticipated as a central contribution to the group's work.

Possible starting points for discussion might be:

What is the significance of a social class in determining children's use of and appreciation of language? Are there implications for the teacher in regional and dialect differences?

What is the significance for the teacher of the concept of critical (or sensitive) period in language development? How far are early adverse experiences reversible? By what means? And when?

How far is language crucial to children's discrimination as well as expression of feeling? Is a 'life-style' governed by language – or does language arise from a 'life style' ? Do children need different forms of language to discrm discriminate different modes of consciousness? Or do different modes of consciousness give rise to different language usage?

What is the role of the teacher in relation to the family? Does this vary according to social background? Is it possible to help children to mastery of two forms of language – one for the family and one for the public world of school? Is this desirable if possible?

In regard to language development have teachers equally important roles as instructors, providers of experience, conversationalists, story-tellers, or models? Do certain roles assume primacy according to the previous experience, age, or ongoing interest of the children? What is the place and validity of an enrichment programme?

Do certain forms of school organization (e.g. vertical streaming) lend themselves more readily than traditional organisations to children's use of language? What is the evidence here?

Is provision for varied experience more likely than systematic training to promote mastery of the mother-tongue in the early years of schooling? What evidence is there to support claims on either side?

How best can we help children to make the transition from the spoken to the written word? Should means differ substantially according to a child's social background and previous experience? Or is the introduction to print a teacher.s legitimate means to neutralize previous gross differences in life-experiences?

In what ways may drama stimulate written language and what connections can be seen between the spoken word and the associated expression?

How far may drama serve as a language workshop serving much of the school curriculum?

Unfortunately space does not allow for examples of: children talking to resolve problems of form and content, or as participants in the drama: children writing, to describe the story and characters they and others portray, to give instructions for making props, to record their researches into history, to reflect on the action and feelings aroused by it. Examples will be available at York.

Perhaps you have your own examples of children's language work associated with drama. If you consider these to be of value to the study group please do bring them with you.

Study Group 4 Poetry for children and children as poets Leader Jeremy Mulford

A The Plowden Report's right – Poetry IS nourishing.
B (What does it nourish?
(
C (What do you mean, nourishing!?
D *aside*: What do you mean, by 'Poetry'?)
A It nourishes the IMAGINATION, of course.
B (What's that?
)
C (What do you mean, 'nourishing? (D *aside*: He means it's good for you.)
A Now don't be perverse, you know DAMN WELL what I mean by 'The Imagination'.
B No I don't
) (
C (No I don't.
A Yes you. . .
B Surely you're not suggesting there's some bit of our brain called 'The Imagination'?
A No, not exactly, but. . . .
C You still haven't told us what you mean by 'NOURISHING'.
D HE MEANS IT'S GOOD FOR YOU.
A Well, yes, thank you, I mean, it's, how shall I say. . .
B (How indeed?
) (
C (How indeed?
D *aside*: How indeed?)

Everybody knows (unless he is in the great majority who don't like poetry) that

POETRY

is

GOODFORYOU Many teachers know it THEY

JUST

KNOWIT

The Poetry section of the Primary Commission will try to penetrate below (or at least, try to avoid) the usual generalities (for some egregious examples, see the Plowden Report's brief section on 'Poetry') by studying, in detail, poems and tapes of children discussing them. This will necessarily involve consideration of *how* to usefully study tapes of children discussing poetry. And it seems certain that we shall want to talk about children writing their own poetry.

Study Group 5 Talking and discussion Leader Martyn Richards
In this study group we hope to take a look at talk in action, both through our own experience as we become involved in the kind of practical activity which many schools are offering to their children, and through a consideration of tapes and transcripts of children talking in a variety of real situations.

For a long time writing has been the yardstick by which many schools judged a child's facility with language. Only more recently, since we have come to know more about the central role of language in thinking, learning and living, have schools begun to realize the primacy of talk. Children come to school as talkers, and as successful talkers who have already, with little direct teaching, been able to use their language to move into and master experience as the need arose. Talk is not a school-centred activity as writing usually is, for it has surrounded and involved our children from their earliest days. It is an immensely varied and flexible means of coming to terms with experience, and when we look at it in its wholeness no list of discussion questions can sum up the range of a teacher's interest in it, though in our 'talk about talk' we may well find ourselves considering:

What purpose is talk serving in different situations?

How adequately is it serving (a) the talker's own purposes (b) the teacher's purposes?

If the purposes of talker and teacher differ, what is the difference? Should there be a difference?

How do children talk when teachers are not present?

What happens when teachers intervene in the talk?

Do we concentrate too much on providing the words, and too little on offering the varied learning and experience which demands talk?

This will be a workshop study group, and it is hoped that our consideration of talk and learning will be embedded in our practical activity as we work in clay, make pictures, write poems, solve problems and struggle with tapes!

Study Group 6 Writing about what, for whom and how Leader Connie Rosen
For young people leaving school writing is a marketable commodity. No one needs convincing that they need to write, but what do we want your children to write for? And why should they want to write? Perhaps we simply have in mind the distant day when they can show the attainment to the world. But we have sufficient evidence now that children write for their own purposes and in their own way, that writing can do something for them here and now, though we're probably tempted to think that unless there is a written product to their activities little real good has been achieved.

The difficulties abound nevertheless. Teachers see themselves very much as the initiators, the theme proposers and through their judgments explicitly expressed or left implicit, they exert great influence both on the areas of attention and on the child's sense of appropriate language. In one school children children may be devoting their time exclusively to fantasy and fiction stories in another all their work will be directed towards domestic and immediate experience. In another their work will be closely associated with the curriculum as a whole, perhaps concentrating on 'facts' and ideas drawn from secondary sources. Whatever the teacher decides to do will undoubtedly influence what the child comes to know as writing. By what means can we decide which is the preferred road?

Teachers will also differ in the degree to which they surround the children's writing with constraints. At one extreme they will not only decide the precise wording of the topic but will have decided in advance what is an appropriate response to it, and measure the children's work against this model. They will have strong ideas about appropriate language and what should be amended, corrected and excised. At the other extreme are teachers who place great faith in the child's spontaneity, leaving him to choose what he has to say and the way he has to say it, and relying on the general pattern of activities and experience to exert a favourable influence. Probably both these pictures are a caricature, but they represent the extremes which can serve as a basis for discussion.

The transition from speaking to writing is a complex one, and presents children (and all of us!) with a host of difficulties. Ultimately we know that the speaking voice has to be edited, modified, supplemented to make sense to the invisible reader. This is a very sophisticated concept. How are young children to grow towards it? What should the attitude of the teacher be to 'written-down speech'? The written language assumes an audience. Who is the child's audience? His peers? The teacher? Or anyone?

We are concerned of course with all the writing done by the children, not only that which arises from the area of the curriculum designated as English. Members of the commission will have worked in a variety of different traditions, some will have had specifically allocated to 'composition', and others, particularly those in British primary schools, are more likely to understand by 'composition work' whatever arises from the activities of the class as well as what individual children may offer of their own accord. In either case, the writing is likely to grow more differentiated as the children get older. What are we to say about this? Are we to provide specific training in, for example, the differing demands of informative and personal, imaginative writing? Or can we rely on the interest and involvement of the activities themselves plus the experience of appropriate reading and talking to do the job?

How does children's writing develop? We know from research studies that it is possible to make quantitative statements about sentence length, size of vocabulary, errors in spelling, punctuation etc. Do these really go to the heart of the matter and capture the most important aspects of development? What exactly can a child do at eleven which he cannot do at six or seven? Are there no psychological questions we must answer before we see how the child realises himself in the written word. Until the last year or so of the primary school, in most important respects, a child's spoken language is ahead of the written lenguage. How should we accommodate this fact? What kind of relationship between the spoken and written word should we cater for?

The spoken language he hears is the child's speech model. What he reads must be his writing model. What should teachers do about this? Provide the books and

hope for the best? Or make some kind of link between particular reading and particular writing?

During the conference we shall be examining a wide variety of children's written work, and in many cases we shall have the teachers present to explain the context from which it arose.

Study Group 7 Children's literature Leader Reg Snowdon

Aims

The principle aim of the study group on children's literature will be to review and evaluate criteria for selecting fiction to be used in the primary/elementary school.

Additionally, it is anticipated that this must involve some consideration of the teacher's approach to and handling of fiction with children, the child's response to fiction, the role of fiction in teaching the mother-tongue and the relevance of fiction to other areas of the primary school curriculum.

Finally, it is hoped that the group may be able to formulate some guidelines for the future. In particular, a translantic exchange if ideas could appropriately result in some important recommendations on the scope and character of the study of children's literature by teachers during initial and in-service education. Which way are we going in the study of children's literature – towards 'kiddielit', or towards 'Eng. Lit.', or towards a new and distinctive empirical literary and social study which will hopefully imporve the standards of English teaching materially in the primary/elementary grades?

Methods

Generally, our method of study will be by a series of informal discussions in which the group will examine a selection of material critically. Criteria for selection, it is thought, can only be confronted as they emerge from the discussion of particular examples – both examples of texts and examples of classroom activities.

To limit the vast amount of potential material, some topices are suggested as starting-points. These are peculiar to the primary elementary school age-range of children, for example:

criteria for selecting
- picture books
- folk tales and fairy stories
- primers and early readers
- children's 'classics'

A pre-conference activity suggested for members is connected with the notion of a children's 'classic' – works of fiction for children which must be read at the primary/elementary school age or missed for ever. Members are invited to prepare a short, illustrated defence of a favourite children's book or favourite writer for children, including if possible some account of childrens' oral or written responses to the chosen story or author. Brief talks on such themes could help with the pooling of ideas on which books should be kept current in the primary/elementary school by teachers and publishers.

Contact with other sections of the conference will be encouraged, particularly with other study groups in commission 3, and opportunities will be created for informal contribution by confereance members working in other areas.

Materials

A select collection of children's fiction, prepared with the help of the Librarian of Ponteland, Northumberland and County Library Service, will be available for use by the study group. This collection will illustrate the crucial themes already mentioned. Visits to differently oriented collections of children's literature will also be possible in York.

Further illustrative material will be available on filmstrips, slides, records and videotapes. Talking points should appear during visits to schools. An open invitation is extended to members to bring any materials they possess which seem relevant to the concerns of this group.

It is suggested that one book which it would be valuable for members to have read in advance of the conference is

Sheila Egoff; G. T. Stubbs and L. F. Ashley (eds.) *Only Connect.* Readings in Children's Literature. Oxford University Press Toronto, 1969.

This collection of critical attitudes could well provide a common experience upon which to base a discussion of current adult views of literature for children and the status of children's literature as a subject of adult study. Two fundamental assumptions of this study group are, first, that in teaching children's fiction the primary/elementary teacher is the principle mediator for the vast majority of children of a great body of English and international literature and, second, that the field of children's fiction is now so distinguished and extensive that the fully-equipped primary/elementary teacher must be a serious student of the genre. We expect these two propositions to command immediate and general assent, but neither they nor their practical implementation will be immune from critical re-evaluation at York.

York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

Commission Four
Chairman: John Dixon, Bretton Hall College of Education, Wakefield
Co-Chairmen: Ronald J. Baker, President, University of Prince Edward, Prince Edward Island
Alan Purves, University of Illinois

COMMISSION 4

A hundred of us are gathering at York from Canada, the United States, Australia and different parts of the U.K. We foresee an intensive week's work – lectures, many small working parties, and seminar groups – and therefore let's acknowledge now that pleasure's important too!

We shall be reviving old friendships and striking up new ones; we hope to enjoy the city and the countryside.

The colleges at York are particularly well planned to offer a sense of community among a large group, and yet opportunity for talk – argument, reflection – in a smaller circle.

If the programme we have planned turns out too exacting, you must remind us of the value of relaxed exchange outside the conference hall and see that we make more room for it.

The programme can be bent, and we assure you that our working party will jump to your aid if you want to bend it.

Ideally, we should set up opportunities in the first couple of days for all the 100 to get some acquaintanceship with one another, and so help the individual to assess where he can find enough challenge to, and understanding of, his current work in English.

Well, we have tried in outline, though you must help in the event.

Dorothy Barnes
Mike Binks
John Dixon
Peggy Jones
Jenny Leech
Geoff Mitchell
Eileen Thompson
Denis Watson

Working Party

The plans in outline.

A conference on teaching and learning English makes special demands: how can we be sure when these processes are going on effectively? Manifestly a good part of them is hidden or obscure, and much is difficult to document. Besides, when we emphasize one aspect of English in preference to others, we tend to develop particular skills in our teaching. And as these skills become engrained, we find i harder to move into other aspects of English work. So we can't discuss teaching and learning processes without making assumptions about what's to be learnt. How is this to be resolved?

Evidence of teaching and learning: Phase 1

We have chosen what seemed the simplest answer, and provided for it to be challenged, yes and even undermined, as the week goes on. The outcome – for us – is still uncertain.

Simplest in what sense?

First in the evidence of teaching: we are collecting a selection of reports by teachers about the way they have approached particular projects. From some at least we expect to get tape recordings/transcripts of discussion between teacher and class. (If this interests you particularly, see further in Preparations). Thus the general approach to teaching and the particular strategies of the teacher in encouraging certain kinds of exchange and discussion can be studied. This material will be selected on two principles: first, general interest, and second, variety of approach.

From this evidence we expect two kinds of questions to arise:

When we look closely at a transcript, what kinds of teaching and

learning seem to be going on?
Does the kind of learning vary, when we consider discussions on different aspects of English?

In part the evidence for *learning* is going to come from the same transcripts and recordings. But there is another source from which we can draw. We are asking the same teachers to collect for us a sample of writing produced in their projects - including any drafts and notes, as well as the final version. From a close study of such material we are hoping to be able to distinguish learning processes set up by the act of writing itself. (Again, if this interests you, see further in Preparations). It seems that questions of two kinds will arise:

When we define or indicate the possible scope of a written task, what seems to offer students the best opportunity for learning in the process of writing?

What in the general context of the project seems to encourage exploratory purposes in writing rather than, say, the attractive organization of ideas already well-formulated?

With luck we hope to be able to include some students' accounts of how they set about, and contributed to, the project.

Kinds of project

What kinds of 'project'? – so far they have not been defined, and in England at least the word indicates, rather vaguely, a block of work that might extend for anything from two or three sessions to a whole term. At present, we wish to avail ourselves of this not-too-closely defined sense. It may be that some work will stem from connected discussions and studies over several weeks; but we are expecting the majority to be much briefer – some no more than three or four sessions. On the other hand, for the early stages of the conference we have tried carefully to define the topic. Rightly or wrongly, we decided to begin with what seemed to be the commonest elements in English teaching 16-22: a focus on literary text, or a focus on an extended piece of writing. Naturally, some members of the commission may wish to challenge the centrality of such work in English studies as they envisage them and one hopes that as the week gathers momentum, they will do so forcibly. (In fact, it seems proper, once the commission has scrutinised teaching and learning in traditional topics, to ask whether a wider frame of reference is needed for English teaching in the seventies.)
To sum up, then: the choice we have made is to restrict in the first place, one variable, *the content*, in the interests of a sharper approach to the little-explored territory of *teaching and learning process* (the second variable). In England at least there are no relevant stocks of videotape or collections of well-documented projects (especially for the young adult age-group) and the conference will represent an initial effort to draw material together. Maybe it will promote an international collection and exchange of interesting material, and we would welcome news of readily accessible material available elsewhere (see Preparations). Our only restriction at York – a major one – is a shoe-string budget.

A collection of project material

Rational economy may have its advantages, nevertheless; we have tried to approach departments whose English work is locally or nationally known, and asked them to select material where the learning and teaching seemed to go

reasonably well. Thus, if anything, we shall have a selective rather than a representative sample – with a possible bonus. Some of the teachers, we hope, will be present and able to introduce the sessions in which their accounts etc are studied. Inevitably only a few 'projects' can be discussed in depth during the conference itself; it seemed sensible therefore to set up a small 'library' attached to our commission, with folders of material accompanied by teachers' and/or students' accounts of the context in day by day work.

In effect, we see no way of preventing the opening days becoming from time to time simply an exchange on how to get the best out of a particular text with students of varying interest and sophistication! Let's acknowledge that English teachers have better reason than most to enjoy listening to detailed experience of this kind, and good English departments tend to grow out of just such exchanges. And let's admit that the concrete practicality of such talk may be needed to balance the analytic precision and speculation of the work on the study materials. Call one the surface, the other the deep structure of the sessions Sunday to Tuesday.

Main working units

Consider our initial materials: a sample of students' drafts and written pieces from certain projects, together with teachers' accounts of their approach, and in some cases, a transcription of part of their discussions. If 100 people are to join in close analysis of such material, it seems best to organize as the working unit, *small groups* of six without a leader (or optionally a double group of twelve, with a chairman). Then, in order to draw ideas together, members will join one or other of two *forums* (roughly 50 members). For lectures and briefing sessions the whole commission will meet together. These are the formal units we plan for the work from Sunday through Wednesday. In addition we are allowing for – anticipating that – other informal groupings, as precise issues are defined or working parties seem called for.

Two phases of work

The assumption for Phase 1, then, is that as teachers of students varying in age from 16 to 21, and varying also across the range of attainment, we have something in common to learn about teaching and learning English.

Thus we decided in Phase 1 to restrict the first variable (the content, or aspect of 'English') to work focussed on a literary text or on a variety of written projects. But clearly it is between the ages of 16 and 21 that most students today (if not tomorrow) are expected to opt for specialisms in the English field. It seemed important, therefore, to provide for a brief, intensive study of a few of the main specialisms. And thus Phase 2.

One can think of these specialisms in two opposed ways: first, as fundamental aspects of English before the age of 16 which simply develop more mature forms after that age; or second, as sharply differentiated studies, emerging after 16 from something more like a matrix of uses of the mother tongue before that. For the moment, we simply note that the implications of these opposed views will be raised during a plenary session on the Wednesday.

Teaching and learning in specialist studies: Phase 2

The list of 'specialist studies' will probably appear arbitrary, as we have hesitated to impose a theory of English on the commission – and opted therefore to list under broad headings what we took to be some accepted areas, rather than to define categories. The broad headings are as follows:

Writing **Audio-visual work**

Literary criticism
Drama

Language studies
Studies in literature and society

Once again, the questions we ask have to be fairly selective, given the time available. We propose to ask:

> What kind(s) of *process* are characteristic of specialist work 16-22 falling under each of these broad headings?
> What forms of teaching and learning are relevant to such processes?

Let's admit that answers to these questions are likely to be tentative – perhaps properly so, at this stage of English teaching. However, we hope to get far enough (with the assistance of other commissions) to decide whether or not there is a general homogeneity between the teaching and learning we have distinguished in Phase 1, and those that we begin to uncover in Phase 2.

A workshop experience

In investigating what are avowedly advanced 'specialisms', the commission has a decided advantage: it can produce its own evidence for the processes involved by doing some work on the spot! So we shall be asking members, in suitable numbers, to opt for a workshop in one of the six topics from Thursday morning. When the processes are then discussed, members may be able to add something fresh, from introspection and observation in the role of student, to their wider knowledge in the role of teacher. And in any case, we guess workshop experience will offer an opportunity for enjoyable refreshment.

Other forms of evidence

Besides producing our own evidence, we shall need to collect – selectively at least – accounts of some of the more interesting work going on 16-22, both in reinterpreting established specialisms (language studies) and in establishing or interpreting new ones (the audio-visual). We doubt whether time will permit a carefully considered interpretation of each fo the six areas chosen, but we do expect that where different interpretations of a specialist study clash, the issues can be clarified and possibly related to choices in the teaching and learning involved.

A coordinating group

If the outcome of Phase 1 takes the form of statements, that of Phase 2 is more likely to be questions for further discussion. But again, we hope and expect that alongside this more analytic probing there will be a valuable exchange of practical experience in trying out new approaches within each specialism. While the six groups are working in this way, a final session will be in preparation by a coordinating group. Their task during Phase 2, when the six groups are working apart, will be to draw together reports from the specialist groups and, hopefully, in the light of those reports and the rest of the week's work to face questions such as these.

> What theory/theories of English studies can account for and relate together the range of specialisms now emerging – or likely to emerge in the near future?
> Is it possible to define a central *core* of English studies and, if so, how do the specialisms relate to it?

A summary of aims

Phase 1

1. to establish ways of working and to break down cross-cultural misunderstandings, especially where a common language obscures differences in terminology;

2. Starting from more traditional aspects of English (Literary studies) to consider:

(i) a range of possible approaches to texts,

(ii) the kinds of learning (and teaching) implied;

3. Focusing next on writing, to consider:

(i) a range of writing that has arisen in English projects,

(ii) the kinds of learning (and teaching) implied.

Where possible, 1 and 2 will be based on teachers' accounts of projects (large or small); written notes, drafts and essays; and may be transcripts or excerpts from lessons or tutorials.

Phase 2

To consider the processes involved in specialist studies of six kinds, and the forms of teaching and learning that seem to be appropriate.

Preparations

Collecting evidence to study or bring along

Phase 1

Not everyone will have the time to prepare and study beforehand, and the commission won't be based on the assumption that you have. But there are things that can be done almost in the course of normal teaching. For instance, tape recording in your own lessons, or those of an interested colleague. You might try recording:

teacher and class discussing a poem or short story together, or
teacher and class looking back reflectively at a longish text they have been studying, or
a small group of students (4-6 perhaps) discussing part of a text on their own; or
teacher and student discussing initial ideas for an essay, or talking over a first draft.

These suggestions indicate just a few of the possibilities for taping during an ordinary day's work in literature; clearly there are many alternatives both within literature teaching and beyond, in other major aspects of English.

We find that simply to listen to the tapes played back sharpens our awareness of what we assume about teaching and learning. If one has time, it's worth selecting an extract to transcribe (indicating pauses hesitations, etc): the exact nature of the exchange (or 'interaction' in the English sense) often becomes much clearer as one studies utterance by utterance.

A second thing to do is to choose a few of the more exploratory pieces of writing by one's students, especially in their draft form (with crossings out, rephrasing and reshapings visible), and then to ask oneself what sorts of process were going on during the "writing". When working on a text or theme you may encourage students to write poems or other pieces as well as analytic commentaries: if so, it's worth seeing how this effects what is expressed by a student, and how what's expressed in poetry, say, relates to what's said in analytic prose. Again, these suggestions indicate a few of the questions one might be asking about the processes that underlie writing of varying kinds.

If you are able to undertake these or similar preparations for your own interest, you may well find two or three useful pieces of evidence to bring to the commission. However diffident you may feel, please do so. In this way, you will

help to build up the library of 'accounts', in which we shall all have the opportunity of browsing. Attach a brief account of the context in which the work was done, e.g.

College of Education student, age 19, in second year;
not an English specialist (main study Art);
preparing long essay (5,000+words) in six or seven 10-minute individual tutorials spread over a ten-week term; the topic suggested by student and agreed with tutor;
some experience the previous year in writing poetry;

enclose some early drafts (about week 4) discussed with tutor, and subsequently revised.

This is a minimum account we guess; you may well prefer to say more.

A further plea : if some of this material turns out to be especially interesting – in discussion with colleagues, say – or if you come across a valuable collection already in existence, we should be extremely grateful if you would contact us immediately: Commission 4, c/o Denis Watson, Bretton Hall, Wakefield, England. If we can hear by, say June 17, this will give us time to consider sending for copies and arranging duplication etc.

Phase 2

If you have a particular interest in one of the workshop topics, you may be able to bring along a selection of material that will contribute to the group's discussions and activities. For example, there have recently been a number of different approaches to the analytic study of language – and how to relate it to an increasing mastery of language in use.

One interesting project now being used in England is the Schools Council's *Language in Use* (Doughty, Pearce and Thornton, 1969). If you or your colleagues have been working in this or a similar field, some account of it, together with examples of students' work arising from it, would be of considerable interest to the 'Language Studies' group.

The more varied the ideas and approaches that we can bring to drama, or audio-visual work, or studies in literature and society, the more stimulating the groups' creative experiments are likely to be: so please feel free to feed in examples, or accounts, of lively work you know about.

Some Useful Reading

If you have the time and inclination, the following should be useful preparatory reading:

Teaching and Learning

D. Barnes, J. Britton and H. Rosen *Language, the Learner and the School*, (Penguin 1969)
for its analysis of discussion. Though it deals with younger students, the implications drawn from examples of the talk that goes on in typical learning situations are applicable to the young adult.

David Holbrook *The Exploring Word* (Cambridge 1967)
a discussion of the education of teachers of English. It contains a chapter, 'What is a seminar?' that includes ample transcribed extracts.

English approaches with young adults

A selection of background accounts of what people are doing in England and Wales would include:

for Sixth Form — NATE English in Education vol. 2 no.2 'English at 16 Plus'

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York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

Commission Five
Chairman: Norman Stephenson, University of Bristol School of Education
Co-Chairmen: Esme Crampton, College of Education, University of Toronto
James Hoetker, University of Illinois

Commission 5: The place of drama in the teaching and learning of English

1. As chairman of commission 5 I should like to welcome you to the York conference. Together with Esme Crampton of the University of Toronto and James Hoetker of the University of Illinois, a number of us have been working for the past twelve months to prepare for this commission. What we want to do in this briefing paper is to give you some idea of our thinking so far and of the plans we have made. It is not our intention that the planning for the week 17 to 24 July should be so tightly organized by us that there is no room for substantial contributions from *all* during the conference. On the contrary, the intention is that each member of the commission should take a very active part through the week to explore the topic we have undertaken. Our initial planning is simply to make sure that there is material and a structure which will make this possible.

2. We enclose a copy of a provisional timetable for the week. You will see that we have twelve working sessions for the commission. At five of these there will be some kind of talk or presentation for all fifty members of the commission. After the introductory session Mrs Veronica Sherborne, who among other things works with the Bristol Young Vic and in the training of teachers of mentally handicapped children, will lead us in a practical session to help us relate movement to drama. Session 3 will begin with a demonstration lesson by Brother Gabriel Barnfield with a class of boys from St George's Secondary School, York, where he teaches. Ray Verrier, formerly a teacher in a Bristol secondary school now lecturer at Bishop Otter College of Education, Chichester, will introduce a discussion in session 6 on the contribution improvisation can make to learning. We expect that Esme Crampton, president of the Canadian Speech Association, with two of her colleagues will lead session 9 on the role of the teacher in drama. The form of the final session of the week will no doubt not be decided until we get to York, but we expect that James Hoetker, recently project director at the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory, Missouri, will assist us in making some sort of evaluation of the week's work.

The major part of the work of the commission will be done in small groups of 8 to 10 people. Sessions 4 and 5, we suggest, should be mainly practical – each group working on some kind of improvisation of its own (you will need appropriate clothing!). On Tuesday we shall be asking commission members to opt for one of five or six study workshops organized loosely around topics that members of the working party here in Bristol are in the process of preparing. Topics are likely to include: Improvisation and learning in English; Children's play and improvisation 6-13 years; Children's play, fantasy and 'undirected' drama for the older child; Children's drama, language and learning; Drama and the use of scripted texts.

There follow later in this paper statements by the members of the working party, but it is important to make clear right now that these members will act as 'convenors' of the workshops rather than as chairmen who necessarily direct the course of the work. They will have given thought to some of the possible directions and will have prepared material – tape recordings and transcripts, videotapes, children's writing and other documentation – but we all very much hope that you will come armed with ideas and material of your own that you will be prepared to feed into the general pool. If any of you have material or ideas that you think ought to be considered before July I shall be very pleased to hear from you. It might be, for instance, that we could duplicate part of a transcript to be available for consideration at York. Each of the convenors is preparing working 'kits' consisting of sufficient copies of material for all of us to work with and to

take away with us afterwards. We expect that at the end of each day there will be a meeting of convenors (and each workshop will need to appoint at least one 'reporter'!) which will attempt to record issues raised and progress made. These reports will contribute to the final session and also to the discussion pamphlet which we expect to be one of the outcomes of the whole conference.

There will be some opportunity in the Open and Exchange sessions noted on the timetable for members of commission 5 to see something of the work of other commissions.

3 It might be helpful to list at this point some of the *aims* of the commission which we have had in mind as we have been working on the preparation. No doubt you will have others of your own which will affect the course the week takes.

a) to consider the nature of dramatic activity – what sort of human behaviour is it? for children? for adolescents? for adults?
b) to consider the kinds of *development* in dramatic activity we might expect to see and foster from childhood through adolescene – what is the relation of drama to intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic development?
c) to consider the roles of the teacherin initiating and fostering dramatic activity at each stage – what can children do for themselves? when and for what purposes do they need the help of teachers? what kind of help?
d) to consider the relation of drama to other English activities – e.g. talk, reading of literature, writing – at what points in a learning situation might the teacher propose dramatic activity?
e) to consider how dramatic activities may be evaluated – for the teacher's purposes? for the needs of public examination?

4. We are interested in the kinds of *claims* that are made about the effect of drama on children and their development. Some of these are very grand – even to the point of suggesting that drama by itself is capable of achieving all the wider aims of education! Here is a sample of the kind of claim that we shall want to consider closely at the conference:

> Drama, and perhaps song, are the only arts which make use of the whole human being as their medium – spirit, mind, emotions, imagination, voice, body. If (in drama) the whole person is willingly employed in communicating a form of truth in words and movements of significance, and perhaps of beauty, the experience may be of inestimable value. (A. F. Alington in *Drama and Education*)

> Through role-playing of typical conflict situations, children and young people can be helped to articulate the ways in which they tend to solve their problems. (F. and G. Schaftel in *Role-Playing for Social Values)*

> To help pupils encounter life as it is, the complexity of relationships in a group and dynamic situation, there is nothing more direct and simple that we can offer than drama. (John Dixon in *Growth through English*)

> Movement close to the floor can give a sense of security and confidence . . . . I find a person who has confidence in himself

is more likely to have confidence in others, and by using these activities I have seen trust and confidence grow. (Veronica Sherborne in *Movement as a Preparation for Drama*)

For those who walk with their eyes open it (child drama) can be found in any place on earth where there are children, parched and battered though it be. (Peter Slade in *Child Drama*)

The headmaster insisted that he had no disciplinary problems in the school and he attributed this to drama. (Squire and Appleby in *Teaching English in the United Kingdom*)

We hope that some of the material we shall be studying at the conference –recording of children's improvisations and so on – will provide the documentation which will enable us to take a fresh look at these and other claims.

5. Each member of the working party was invited to make some statement about the way he was thinking in preparation for the study workshops, to be included in this briefing paper. As was to be expected perhaps, each tackled this assignment in a very different way and the following section may give you an idea of the variety of interests and attitudes which we represent. Without doubt there are others which find no place here – we hope that you will note these as they occur to you and make sure that they get a hearing at the conference.

5a. Bill Tindall, who is head of drama at Lawrence Weston Comprehensive School in Bristol (non-selective secondary, 11 to 18 years) and is particularly interested in the use of scripted texts in drama, has listed the kinds of material he expects to have available at York. Each of the convenors is preparing a similar 'bank', items in which will be interchangeable between study workshops.

1. *Stimulus*	scripted play or extract from one (e.g. *The Birdcatcher in Hell* in Holbrook's *Thieves and Angels*).
Work (recorded)	children acting the play onto tape as in a radio play; children improvising the play onto tape in any way they choose.
(written)	children will also write about the play in any way they choose and possibly illustrate.
2. *Stimulus*	a story or extract from one.
Work (recorded)	improvised representation of the scene; dramatized reading of scripted play based on the above – or a poem of the above (choral speech).
(written)	the dialogue and poetry which we will record.
3. *Stimulus*	a piece of scenery, prop or lighting arrangement
Work (recorded)	improvisation from the stimulus
(written)	after improvisation, a written form of what children acted – either poem, story or dialogue; I shall keep a note of the development of each plot.
4. *Stimulus*	opening line of a piece of dialogue
Work (written)	'imagine the scene – what led up to this being spoken – what characters are present etc? continue the dialogue
(recorded)	the dialogue which ensues; possibly improvised dialogue too.

All this should provide material for discussion and I am hoping that when the group have finished analysing the kids' work they'll see what they can do."

5b. Roger Samways is a teacher of English at Cotham Grammar School, Bristol (a selective secondary school 11-18 years), and is particularly interested in the place of improvisation in the learning of English. He quotes Dorothy Heathcote:

> Drama is *not* stories retold in action. Drama *is* human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges.

and continues:

1. in my own teaching it is, broadly speaking, true to say that 'human beings in situation are explored' and that, I hope, 'insights' are gained.
2. There are quite a few occasions when drama is *not* necessary in such exploration (or not appropriate).
3. Drama in this context is 'exploratory role play' in a given situation, aiming at a shaping or structuring of experience with an immediacy which only drama can give ('drama *is* human beings confronted . . .?) It does not presuppose an audience.

The foregoing statements assume that some of the following conditions prevail:

i A thematic approach to English teaching: being prepared to allow a theme to develop over a period of time ranging from a few days to perhaps a month or more if the children want to go on exploring the ideas and possibilities contained in it.

ii A willingness by the teacher to accept what the children have to to offer and to use this as a stimulus to further development of the theme, topic, situation etc.

iii A classroom situation in which genuine talk is considered important, a real *listening* on the part of teacher and pupil alike. ('Perhaps the most important general implication for teaching is to note that anyone who succeeded in outlawing talk in the classroom would have outlawed life for the adolescent . . .' James Britton in *Language and Learning*.)

To sum up!

Drama is a tool that can be used in English teaching to give an added dimension to things, to bring aspects of a broader situation to the surface and to isolate them for closer scrutiny. It is improvisation/role-playing which gives an immediacy, a 'here-and-now' quality to a human situation.

> Drama, of its nature, encourages talk and awareness of others, whether in the acting out process or in the pre-acting discussion and planning of an improvisation.
>
> It can lead in many directions; certainly into considering scripted plays, into creating documentaries on a given theme, into personal writing from a role played. It can serve as a means of 'tidying up', tightening a situation which has been explored by other means in English.
>
> This is inevitably a very generalized statement. Examples from the classroom can be given to support statements made in this way I think, but it seems important first to sort out some of the basic assumptions one makes. I hope I have done this!"

5c. John Hardingham teaches at Falconride Junior School, Kingswood Bristol and is working with Irene Shannon, until recently a teacher at the same school and now lecturer at St Matthias College of Education, Bristol. Their particular interest is children's play and dramatic improvisations from 6 to 13

years. They make a general statement about creative drama as they see it and then ask some questions with a practical application:

'Man is a social being and most of his problems arise out of his struggle to reconcile the demands of society with the impulse for personal freedom. The struggle begins very early in life. A child's marked inability to adjust his needs to that of the group can make him incapable of functioning inside that group. He may be totally self-indulgent, coarse, even brutish or he may, on the other hand, be hypersensitive.

The 'brute' lacks imagination and sympathy, is seemingly unaware and insensitive. The hypersensitive is destined to suffer and, particularly as he may contribute to the conscience of society, society should be encouraged to feel a responsibility towards the relief of his suffering. Both need help. Both have problems in personal relationships. What they have in the extreme, we all have to some extent. The school should be helping to solve these problems. We believe that in the development of personality regular participation in creative drama can have lasting value. It is concerned first and last with the behaviour of human beings. It provides opportunities for the development of awareness, awareness of self, of one's own body – its capabilities and limitations – awareness of the imagination as a creative power and source of delight, awareness of others and of one's environment and place in it. Awareness, properly nurtured can bring sympathy, understanding, sensitivity. The role of language in this whole process is crucial and will, we hope, be fully discussed at the conference.

We all recognize the importance of play in the child's development. Creative drama might be considered a structural extension of that play. Structuring is all-important and here, we believe, lies the teacher's main role – in the preparation rather than in the lesson itself. His findings should form the basis for the subsequent session, and so by a process of continual adaptation to the needs of the children.

We have much to learn. Here is a selection of some of the questions we are asking ourselves. You are invited to consider them too and to bring your own to the conference:

i What is 'real'? How far are children aware of reality in a simulated situation? What is reality for the child? e.g. 'I didn't play in the Wendy House today. I was too busy. I just cooked the dinner and came straight out again.'

ii In a follow-up lesson how exactly does the teacher decide which lines to develop from the previous lesson in relation to the children's needs? Which children? Which needs?

iii Assuming that sensitivity and tolerance can be seen to grow in creative drama, how far can we reasonably hope that these will be carried over into real-life situations?

iv Some people have never had any experience of creative drama, yet seem to have matured into well-balanced, coherent beings. What have they missed?

v Many of us will remember occasions when a drama lesson led to an infringement of privacy. The incident may have been painful for the child and embarrassing for the teacher and other children. How was this dealt with? Can such incidents be avoided?

vi How do you control your group?"

5d. Nick Otty teaches English at Kingsfield School, Bristol (a non-selective secondary school 11-18 years) and is particularly interested in the kinds of drama that children – and adolescents – do for themselves.

He writes:

Children's play, fantasy and 'undirected' drama – what do children do on their own which could be called drama? How important is it? Should space be cleared for it in the educational (English) programme?

Example 1 There was the play of the 'poor lost child' – who had been invited by the taxi-men to go for a drive. When they were a hundred miles from home, they asked her to pay the fare. She had no money, and they turned her out in the middle of the road. She then wandered about until she was tired and lay down in the middle of the road and slept. Her mother had to go and look for her all through Kensington Gardens. The taxi-men sent her the wrong way when she asked where her little girl was; but in the end she found her.' This like many other plays, was improvised cooperatively on the spot by several children, and played half-a-dozen times, with minor variations, with great abandon. Susan Isaacs in *Intellectual Growth in Young Children.*

Example 2 *The Little Girl Lost* by William Blake.

Example 3 My friend and I play 'Husband and Wife'. I am the wife, I have to wash-up and wash the floor or clean the windows, while my friend sleeps. (East Dulwich 10 year old).

This revealing drama is apparently also stock repertory in the United States where, according to Brian Sutton-Smith, the domestic hero enters the home, clasps the 'mother' in his arms, gives her a loud kiss, stretches, and says 'Well, I guess I'll take a nap!'

The most favourite game played in schools is 'Schools' says an Edinburgh 9 year old. 'Tommy is the headmaster, Robin is the school-teacher, and I am the naughty boy. Robin asks us what are two and two. We say they are six. He gives us the belt. Sometimes we run away from school and what a commotion! Tommy and Robin run after us. When we are caught we are taken back and everyone is sorry.

Devon version of *Old man in the Well:*

Mother, on seeing the old man in the well:
'What are you doing here?'

Old Man 'Picking up sand.'
Mother 'What do you want sand for?'
Old Man 'To sharpen my needles.'
Mother 'What do you want needles for?'
Old Man 'To make a bag.'
Mother 'What do you want a bag for?'
Old Man To keep my knives in.'
Mother What do you want knives for?'
Old Man 'To cut off your heads.'
Mother 'Then catch us if you can.'

I. and P. Opie in *Children's Games in Street and Playground.*

Example 4 Extracts from a teaching diary. A group of 13 to 14 year olds improvise for themselves, using masks:

'Of the plays emerging from the mask idea, the one with the

most emotional commitment behind it is 'The Mask of the Devil'. Here is the story: A young girl, her sister and her mother are having breakfast. In the conversation it emerges that the girl has just recovered from chicken pox and is to be sent away to the house of an aunt to convalesce. She remarks that the aunt is mad and is reprimanded by mum. She is taken to the station, travels off by train and is met by the aunt at the other end. The aunt is clearly mad.

At midnight the girl is woken by a door slamming. She looks out of the window and sees her aunt going off to the woods. She follows. In a clearing she sees three figures dancing. One wears a skull mask, one a grey mask with long grey hair and a clock face, and one a mean tight black mask with gold edges to its hooded eye-holes and a black halo. She speaks to them and is told by each their names: Death, Time and Hate. She runs back to the house, and goes to bed, but thinking things over she becomes convinced that the figures are really her mother, sister and aunt, and that the masks 'give them their power'.

Next night: same sequence of events, but the girls removes the masks of Time and Hate, and they collapse. She struggles with Death, but cannot remove the mask. In a dream she sees the three talking and hears them say that the only thing that defeats death is the bible. Next night therefore she attacks Death with a bible and kills her.

At this point the narrator appears in the mask of the Devil, and the girl puts on the mask of Death and the two run away together.

The group did not want to improve the acting or the play; they simply wanted to act it over and over again, with or without an an audience . . . Why?'

All these examples raise puzzling questions about the function of children's play and fantasy, about *how long* they have a need for such free improvisation and about the role of the teacher – particularly the English teacher. We shall consider these and other questions which will occur to you at the conference.

5e. Finally, Pat Smyth, who is a lecturer in English teaching at the University of Bristol School of Education, is concerned with children's play, language and learning. In her contribution she analyses some work by Bill Tindall's children and provides a kind of 'model' of the way in which her study workshop might operate:

"A class of 12 year olds have read a play, *The Birdcatcher in Hell*, with their teacher. They are ready to improvise their own version, they are gathered round the microphone and have been advised to concentrate on conveying the story through sound.

This is the opining of the original play:

Yama Yama the King of Hell comes forth to stand
Athe meeting of the ways.
(SHOUTING)
Yai! Yai! Where are my minions?

Demons Haa! Here we are.

Yama If any sinners come along, set upon them and drive them off to Hell!

Demons We tremble and obey.

(Enter the birdcatcher, Kiyoyori)

This is the children's opening:

Teacher	*The Birdcatcher in Hell* by 2L
Jackie	Right men. Quiert!!!(*Shouting*)
Demons	Right, master.
Jackie	Let's find something to do . . . erm . . . Men! . . . Ping!
Michael	Yes?
Jackie	Erm . . . How are you getting on down by the river bank?
Michael	Nothing down here sir, only dead fish.
Jackie	Oh . . . Can't you find any sinners? *(exasperated)*
Michael	No sir. There's none in sight. *(complacent)*
Jackie	Well . . . You may as well bring back your men. Go and get them.
Michael	Yes sir.
Jackie	Erm . . . Where's that group along the roadside? . . Ho!
David	Yes sir?
Jackie	Erm . . . How's your group getting along?
David	Not very well sir. We haven't seen anybody yet.
Jackie	*(subdued)* Gosh . . . Well I need somebody. It's been a bit boring just sitting here all day.
Teacher	BUT UNKNOWN TO YAMA ALONG THE ROAD ONE KIYOYORI, A BIRDCATCHER, IS WENDJNG HIS WHISTLING WAY!

What can we tell from this few minutes of children's drama about the learning that may be going on through the language we hear? What claims do we make for language in general that could be said to be fulfilled by what these children have done?

i Language is the means by which we come to terms with experience.

Jackie, Michael and David have two sets of experience to cope with: what the teacher has given them to sort out and also what they have inside themselves to sort out. They must intertwine the two in order to take a step forward. We call this learning! The original play offers an opportunity for the boys to examine the power-game. The moves in this game, the give and take of human existence, are basic in every individual's experience. The first thing we notice is that the children's opening is much longer than the original. The original makes no bones about the position of Yama who, without a second thought, orders his bunch of demons about their business. The children are not so sure! Jackie, playing Yama, has to feel his way into his authority. He gives his demons proper names – Ping and Ho – and he makes the meeting of the ways into a real place in the countryside with a river-bank and roads that you walk on with banks to them too. The other boys enter into the imaginary scene (I don't like the sound of those fish at all!). Thus the children transform the equivocal Yama/Demons thing into a concrete and much more complex situation. They are twelve years old and they don't really trust the idea of things happening simply to order. Jackie knows his teacher divides the class into groups and gets things done that way. Michael and David give him a problem: they can't find any sinners at the moment, so what is Yama going to do about that?

ii Language is the means by which we move towards objectivity.

If we couldn't *say* anything about anything we would never be able to plan for the future, we would be trapped irrevocably in the complexity of immediate experience. Forms of reflection, which are important to being human, would escape us. Education should help us towards that lively inner monologue which is a means of living better. In their play these children are beginning the process

that their teacher will hope them to be proficient in by the time they leave school. It is clear that in the setting of the play they are in a good position to be spectators of experience while pretending to be participants. They are free to conjecture, for instance, 'What will happen if a sinner doesn't come along? . . .' Presumably the story would have been very different. But here, in the language of the people in the plot, is the right sort of opportunity for beginning to see that there are more sides to questions than may at first be apparent.

iii Language is the means by which we successfully undertake the variety of roles that life demands of us.

Jackie has to play the boss and Michael and David the servants. Two poles that we run between all our lives. None of the boys is quite sure how all this works and Jackie is the worst off of all. We can trace the way in which his language shows how he wavers. With simple orders he's fine: he has played war-games, he has seen his teachers organize work in the classroom, he has read the part of Yama in the original play:

> Well, you may as well bring your men. Go and get them.

However, he isn't at all sure what he will do when Ping brings back his men, so he turns a little desperately to Ho. He's more hesitant now and both his questions need a little thinking about . . . 'Erm' . . And Ho's lack of cooperation leaves him almost at a complete loss! Who is he and who is he addressing when he drops his lordly tone and says in schoolboy tones and forms:

> Gosh . . Well I need somebody. It's been a bit boring just sitting here all day?

There is a lot more to be said: the play goes on its fascinating way and the teacher enters the scene as well. We hope that some members of the commission will be interested in examining in this way more excerpts from work in the classroom, so that our familiar claims for learning through language and drama may be documented – or refuted! I hope we may reformulate some of these slaims and, more than this, make some new ones.

I hope that these statements have made clearer some of the issues and ways of working that we have in mind for Commission 5. I am very conscious that this briefing paper represents *British* preconceptions and *British* attitudes about drama and English. This is inevitable at this stage but it is not, I fervently hope, representative of what will happen at the conference. We are all looking forward eagerly to meeting and working with our colleagues from Canada and the United States and will welcome whatever materials and insights you are able to bring. May I repeat my invitation to anyone, British, American or Canadian, who has a specific contribution of material or issue which he would like to form part of our preparation to send it directly to me. Otherwise, bring it all with you!

Norman Stephenson
University of Bristol School of Education
(35 Berkeley Square, Bristol 8)

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

Saturday 17 July	REGISTRATION Tea & Chat	LUNCH	
Sunday 18 July			1 INTRODUCTION
Monday 19 July	3 Gabriel Barnfield / Drama with children		
Tuesday 20 July	5 Workshop (practical emphasis)		
Wednesday 21 July	6 Ray Verrier Improvisation & Learning		7 Workshop
Thursday 22 July	8 Workshop		9 Esme Crampton Role of Teacher
Friday 23 July	11 Workshop		12 Jim Hoetker Final Meeting
Saturday 24 July	PLENARY OVERVIEW		

0900 1200 1400

COMMISSION FIVE : THE PLACE OF DRAMA

YORK
1971

		RECEPTION and Opening of Exhibition /DINNER	PLENARY Mr Van Straubenzee /DES
	2 Veronica Sherborne Movement & Drama	DINNER	PLENARY Mr Jim Squire
			4 Workshop (practical emphasis)
			Lord Mayor's Reception York
			10 Workshop
			Buffet & Entertainment

1600 1630 1730 2000 2030

York 1971 International Conference

Teaching and Learning English

Commission Six
Chairman: Emrys Evans, Coventry College of Education
Co-Chairmen: Ruth McConnell, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia
Dorothy Davidson, Texas

COVENTRY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
KIRBY CORNER ROAD
CANLEY
COVENTRY, ENGLAND

April, 1971

Dear Member,

I am writing to you on behalf of the preparatory working party for commission 6, 'English and Curriculum Change', at the York 1971 International Conference, *Teaching and Learning English*. We should like to welcome you to the conference, and to our commission in particular. The conference brochure will already have given you a general idea of the areas the various commissions plan to cover, and will have led you to your present choice. This pamphlet is intended to give a more precise idea of the kind of work we hope to do, and some of the ways we hope to do it.

Most of each working day will be spent by all delegates in their commissions, with three plenary sessions of the entire conference. However, in the arrangement of living accommodation at York, members of the different commissions will be under the same roof, there will be plenty of opportunity to exchange ideas at unscheduled times, and there will also be open and exchange sessions at 4.30 each afternoon, designed to supplement this exchange.

The organized work in commission time is divided into twelve sessions in all, each of 1½ to 2 hours. We have tried to offer members of our commission three different approaches to our topic. First, four sessions are on more or less traditional lines: that is to say, they will be opened by a speaker or speakers, and followed by general discussion and perhaps small-group discussion as well. The topics will be general questions of principle in curriculum change, and the special role of English. The names of these speakers are not all certainly known as this pamphlet goes to press, but we hope you will hear from people of considerable experience in their own fields from both sides of the Atlantic.

Another two or three sessions will be similarly arranged, but in these the opening material will consist of reports from teachers working in schools actually involved now in doing this kind of work. After these reports, members will be invited to ask questions, to discuss the kind of work being done, and to refer back to the reports as concrete examples of the week's topic in action.

Thirdly, we thought all members would like to select some specific area to consider within the commissions' general topic, and for this purpose we invite you to choose one of six smaller groups, in which the remaining four or five

sessions will be held. The headings for these groups, and more particular indications of their fields of consideration will appear on later pages.

While we see the other sessions as 'feeding in' ideas and reports, we hope that the commissions' contribution, to the work of the conference as a whole, to its planned outcomes in the way of publications, and to the continuing discussion on both sides of the Atlantic that it should stir up, will come largely through the work of these groups. They will help to determine the nature of the final summing-up session of the commission, and in turn of the conference overview session on the morning of Saturday, 24 July.

In addition to notes on the group areas of consideration, which will help you to choose which group you want to join (a choice we shall ask for from you as soon as you arrive at York), and perhaps to do a little preparatory work, you will find a short statement from each of the reporting schools as far as they are definitely known, and a very brief list of books which seem likely to be referred to during the week.

I hope you will find this material useful, and look forward very much to meeting you in July at York.

Yours sincerely,

W. D. EMRYS EVANS

The six sub-groups

The intention is that members will meet in these groups of 8-10 people for four or five sessions, and concentrate on the discussion of a specific area of the commission's whole field. On the following pages you will find notes on some of the questions to be considered by each sub-group. These have been prepared by the sub-group's coordinator, who will be available as a member of that group to help with its work. They are not intended to be exclusive . Any material that members care to bring to York which might be relevant to the work of their sub-group would be very welcome: especially if there were general copies available for discussion.

The groups and their coordinators are as follows:

1 *The Defining of Objectives for Curriculum Change*
David Hepworth, Coordinator of the York and District Curriculum Development Centre, King's Manor, York.

2 *The Evaluation of Curriculum Material*
Alan Townsend, c/o County Library HQ, London Road, Shrewsbury.

3 *English, Curriculum and 'Growth'*
Michael Hayhoe, Keswick Hall College of Education, Norwich, Norfolk.

4 *Teachers as Learners and Planners*
D. C. Venvell, Senior Educational Adviser, Shropshire County Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury.

5 *Assessment in New Curricula*
Beryl Jones, Coventry College of Education, Kirby Corner Road, Canley, Coventry.

6 *Curriculum Change and Public Opinion*
David Herbert, President Kennedy Comprehensive School, Rookery Lane, Coventry.

1 *The Defining of Objectives for Curriculum Change*
(as regards teaching and learning English).
Is it possible to define educational objectives clearly? What is the most adequate terminology or schema so far arrived at?

Is there anything unique about English as a subject, which either makes it impossible to define its objectives, or makes it require a special terminology?

If it is possible to define objectives in English, in what areas is curriculum change most necessary? How would such changes either begin to fulfil new objectives, or fulfil older objectives more adequately?

What balance is needed between objectives concerned with personal development and more clearly definable objectives, specially in language learning? Or is this a false division?

What special part does the English section of the curriculum play in achieving the overall educational objectives of the school?

2 *The Evaluation of Curriculum Material.*
Much new curriculum material is likely to be available at York for the inspection of commission members. What are the merits and weaknesses of the various schemes and packs produced by development projects on both sides of the Atlantic? How valid is the general philosophy behind particular schemes? How useful and appropriate to the age level and needs of the pupils are the materials themselves? How acceptable to teachers are the kinds of organization, teaching approaches and teacher roles that they demand?

Can the schools meet the extra demands made in terms of new subject contributions (e.g. sociology and social anthropology) and on resources in

general? Are the projects expecting too high a level of understanding and teaching performance from the majority of teachers and is in-service training, on the scale needed, practicable? Does present in-service training, adequately equip newly qualified teachers to contribute to this kind of course? What problems are posed and doubts raised for English teachers in particular?

For some years large numbers of teachers of English have been organizing thematic courses within their own departments and in some schools have been centrally involved in planning and contributing to integrated courses at all levels. However, some teachers of English still have strong reservations about committing English department staff and time to interdisciplinary and other courses with a social science dimension. This in spite of the fact that many English teachers over the past decade have tended to move out from the traditional confines of their subject. The teacher of English, less content-dominated than his other specialist colleagues, has enjoyed greater freedom to range widely in the search for new material for discussion, dramatic and written work.

The Keele Project in Britain, and others in North America, stress the value of cooperative action by a group of teachers in the exploration or investigation of the advantages of joint work in social sciences and the expressive arts. Such courses can be seen as providing improved opportunities for a varied range of kinds of writing and oral work and a rich vein of experiences to stimulate dramatic and other expressive work.

Concern may be felt over the place of literature in such courses. Will theme-based interdisciplinary work place harmful limitations on the choice of literary material or over-encourage an anthology approach? Will literature be used too often as "evidence" and sometimes perhaps insensitively, by non-specialists in certain kinds of team teaching situation? Might team teaching fail to provide opportunities for the establishment of the close relationship between teacher and pupils, traditionally sought by the teacher of English? Are such courses likely to be too tightly structured and lacking in flexibility for the more opportunistic and inspirational teachers of English? Are such courses likely to threaten the identity and standards cultivated by the good English department? Is the department likely to be seen merely as a servicing agent by the other specialists (compare the fears of Art departments that they might become mere trainers of illustrators)? Or does involvement in such courses allow teachers of English to keep more closely in touch with the pupils' development and use of language across a broader spectrum of the curriculum than would traditionally have been the case? Does this situation permit English teachers to play a more influential role and provide a starting point from which to help to implement a language policy across the curriculum? To what extent does the growing presence in schools of such courses and their support materials force the English department towards a reappraisal of its role within the total school curriculum?

3 *English, Curriculum and 'Growth'*

> Starting from the child . . . is not a policy that can dispense with having a view about aims, even though explicit mention and defence of them may be noticeably absent in such talk. The concepts associated with such policy which do seem to come nearest to an explicit statement of aims, however, are those of needs, interest, and growth, each of which deserves separate and close attention.
>
> R. F. Dearden, *The Philosophy of Primary Education*, 1968

The concept of child-centred education is very much tied up with the word 'growth', a key word in that excellent and liberating account of the 1966

Dartmouth Seminar by John Dixon, *Growth Through English*. It would seem a priority task to arrive at an adequate notion of what 'growth' means, and then to ask ourselves 'growth towards what?', for this is what the word implies in human terms, and here we may well enter the areas of cognitive and affective development and value judgments. Our conclusions may help to remove the 'slogan' overtones that 'growth' is acquiring and may help us to be more precise in designing and evaluating curricula in English.

English teachers have been very anxious to develop ways of teaching based on increased student participation and the 'child-centred' approach. In the desire to get rid of old rigidities based on skills and heritage models of English teaching, there has been considerable reactive suspicion, in Britain at least, of curriculum planning and its possible mis-application. The Dartmouth Seminar suggested something of this in chapter three of *Growth Through English*. We should consider whether this, among others, is adequate reason for not engaging in such curriculum planning and evaluation.

What are the implications of 'child-centredness' for classroom strategy and for the initial and in-service training of teachers? How does a person become the sort of teacher that the Dartmouth Seminar approved of? (The 1968 NCTE report on British teachers of English graded them as A or E! What are the implications of this?)

Many teachers are now committed advocates and practitioners of 'child-centred' and 'growth-motivated' ways of teaching English. What are the educational arguments for this? Have we taken this line too far? What are the gains? What, if any, are the losses? The 1968 NCTE report felt that this approach seemed 'far more concerned with emotion than intellect,' implying that in reacting against one imbalance there was the danger of creating another. In his preference to the second edition of *Growth Through English*, John Dixon argues successfully the rightness of the Dartmouth Seminar's celebrating creativity but suggests that we need also to look at the development of intellectual language as well. What present areas of English teaching need looking at again? Why? A balance between the cognitive and the affective? Between the creative and analytic uses of language? Between individual growth and responsibilities towards society? Again, many of these will demand value judgments.

In his comment on the NCTE report, Andrew Wilkinson suggested that 'too often there is a lack of integration, of planning, of sequence – even of aims and goals in anything more than a vague form.' It would seem to be at least part of the commission's task to change this state of affairs.

4 *Teachers as Learners and Planners*

Faced with the need for change occasioned by an alteration in the character of the school, or in its leadership, or in the general philosophy within it, teachers will embark upon new courses and new situations, some with misgivings, others with abundant enthusiasm. What happens then is a confusing process – some teachers learn new skills, others organise the programme of work meticulously; on the other hand others abandon the new curriculum or method in despair, or disillusioned, allow standards to decline rapidly, even quarrel amongst themselves. To distinguish between these teachers as between progressive and reactionary would be naive. What causes teachers to pull back from experiment, or to manage it inefficiently? What would help them to adopt new roles, develop new skills?

Programmes of in-service education, advisory and consultant support, text and guide books, are all available, and bodies such as NATE, NCTE and CCTE have been attempting over several years to provide security and inspiration to those attempting change or in a situation where change is urgently needed. How successful are such programmes and such associations?

Do we overestimate the capacity of teachers to understand the basis of educational theory, to perceive the function of educational technology, to master the structure and organization of new materials? Are there sufficient charts of the new territories for them to set out on the journey with some confidence of ever arriving? Is the teacher under such pressure to maintain a standard, to achieve the measurable aims, that the risk of a collapse of standards or the lack of convincing criteria deter him from change, or clog and threaten his attempts so that he is oversensitive to flaws and handicaps?

What of the school staff? What organization of support do most staffs or faculties give the experimenting teacher? Where does status and authority rest? And do developments in subject areas such as English tend to run counter to the general ethics of the school?

These are some of the questions Group 4 will consider.

5 *Assessment in New Curricula*

If we take a new look at the curriculum, it surely follows that we must take a new look at the problems of evaluation. How are we to determine which learning experiences are likely to be of value to the individual child? In integrated or enquiry-based approaches to the curriculum, where subject barriers become less apparent or even disappear, subject disciplines may take either a supporting or a leading note.

In this case, the matter of assessment becomes more complex. How are we to assess what a student *must* know? How can we assess *what* he knows? Apart from cognitive content, should we attempt to assess attitudes? Is it valid to make negative assessment of the 'doesn't try hard enough' sort?

If not, how do we make psoitive assessment of effort, attitudes and so on? Do we need yet another assessment for the acquisition of skills? Can all these various forms of assessment be objective? How valuable is subjective assessment?

How far do we consider the demands of externally set public examinations? If we accept them as they are, how do we tell if the pupil is adequately prepared without the termly tests?

Is it possible that the traditional test or examination is no longer valid? If not, what can be put in its place as a means of establishing standards, assessing progress and judging how potential ability has been fulfilled?

These are perhaps some of the questions which need to be considered. The discussion of assessment may well help clarify the aims and objectives of the curriculum. At present, teachers working in new curricula mainly trust in their subjective impression that all is well – or otherwise. Is it necessary to structure and categorise modes of assessment?

If so – how are the criteria to be established?

6 *Curriculum Change and Public Opinion*

Recent curriculum changes have been initiated in many cases by, or at any rate in, the English department and the English teacher has come to be seen by many as 'agent provocateur' for these developments. The doubts and criticisms expressed by some require serious consideration for two reasons. Firstly the scepticism of others may act as a useful restraint upon the over-zealous for whom newness is its own justification. Secondly the English teacher who is convinced of the validity of curriculum change can only defend and extend its workings if he has really thought through the principles and 'costed' the execution.

Curriculum changes result from new concepts of the learning processes, involve use of new materials, may blur or destroy the frontiers between school departments, and may abandon or drastically modify the disciplines traditionally

associated with a given subject. Many in the world of education and particularly outside it are distrubed by the results this may have. Rightly or wrongly educational theory influences them less than 'practical results'. Headmasters and principals eye their school's 'standards'; parents bridle at the thought of their child in a guinea-pig situation; employers distrust internal continuous assessments; colleges are unhappy lest entry standards fall.

A system of learning based on child-preference with the teacher as adviser/learner is seen by many as insufficiently demanding, too often leaving the child to revolve about the axis of his own ideas and experiences. A loosely structured teaching situation leaves too many loopholes for the 'slacker' and results in such a plethora of themes and ideas being followed that the teacher's role can be only superficial and supervisory. Parents feel that work motivated by the child's own preference is merely an extension of a 'hobby' or extra-curricular obsession and makes little effective contribution to standards expected by Further Education and by employers. Many colleagues in staff rooms and faculties accept some of the principles behind curriculum change but feel that 'my subject doesn't lend itself to that'.

It may well be that the future success and extension of integrated studies. humanities projects and the like depends on the extent to which the converted can reassure the sceptics, which itself depends on clear and unequivocal understanding of the philosophy, method, and purpose behind the changes.

Schools and Programmes

Three commission sessions have been set aside for reports from teachers and others directly concerned with new style work in secondary English. We had hoped to have reports from two British Representatives, one Canadian and two from the United States. So far, unfortunately, difficulties of communication with the United States have meant that we have no representatives from that country scheduled to report. The British and Canadian schools and programmes concerned are introduced in the short paragraphs which follow, each written by the person who will present the report at the Conference.

The commission chairman would be very glad indeed to hear, as soon as possible, from any United States member who would like to report on work he is concerned with. Will they please write either to the US co-chairman direct or to Emrys Evans, at 24 Fields Court, Warwick, England, giving some indication of the kind of school or programme they would like to report on, on the general lines of these British and Canadian ones?

Great Britain

SHEREDES SCHOOL, HODDESDON, HERTFORDSHIRE

The environment
Hoddeson is a town forming part of ribbon development along the A 10 trunk route 20 miles north of London. A large proportion of the population of 22,000 consists of people who have gradually moved out of North London. It is largely a commuter town but with developing light industries; the majority of parents are relatively affluent skilled or semi-professional workers, although the intake as a whole covers a fairly wide range of social background.

There are no selective schools within the catchment area: the intake is all – ability and covers a fairly large geographical area. The school takes children from 20 primary schools, 10 in Hoddesdon itself and 10 in the surrounding area.

The school
Sheredes is a purpose-built, coeducational comprehensive school, designed to admit 150 children each year. It opened in 1969 with one 1st-year group and it will grow, taking in one year at a time, until it reaches its provisional roll of 900 pupils.

Organization
Each year's intake of pupils is based in a self-contained year area with its own social and administrative centre. There are form or registration groups of 25-30, each with a group tutor; while a year tutor has a general social and pastoral oversight or all pupils in each year.

There are seven curriculum areas which also occupy their own self-contained parts of the school which include a departmental library and resource centre of audio-visual equipment and other materials. (There is also a Central Resource Centre with secretarial help in typing, reprographic, filing and art work. The central library will finally become a 6th form library, a general reference library, and will contain a central catalogue of all books and other materials in the department centre.)

The curriculum areas are:

HUMANITIES	which incorporate history, geography and part of English.
EXPRESSIVE ARTS	which incorporates English, drama and music.
MATHEMATICS	
SCIENCES	
LANGUAGES	French from the 1st year and the option of Latin or German from the 3rd year.
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES	which incorporates art, pottery, woodwork, metalwork, fabric craft and cookery.
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	

There is no streaming or setting and the working unit is either a whole or a half-year group with a staffing ratio of 1 to 25 so that there are possibilities for flexible grouping within a blocked timetable. There are four periods of 70 minutes each day and some of these are blocked into two so that children are in a department for a whole morning or afternoon.

All children will follow a broad curriculum for their first five years and in general all options, including choice of examination, must be made within the curriculum areas with all children keeping in contact with all subjects (with the exception of Modern Languages) until the end of the 5th year.

Assessment and Examinations

There is a system of continuous assessment made by subject tutors and correlated by group tutors.

The school's first pupils will take GCE 'O'-level and CSE, both internally set in the case of humanities. After that pupils will take the nationally planned single 16+ examination, again internally set where appropriate.

In the humanities, for example, there will be a combined course for all pupils with examinations at the two levels but there will be passes in three subjects and it would be possible to take these in various combinations of GCE and CSE.

The place of English in the organization of the school

The English department works in two areas of the curriculum. Firstly in the humanities, where it links with history and geography, the basic teaching team being specialists in these subjects, plus a craft specialist. Humanities has five periods per week with a whole year group working together. Secondly there is English in the expressive arts where it links with drama and music; this area has three periods per week, working with half-year groups.

Elizabeth Cartland
Sheredes School
March 1971

BICESTER COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, OXFORDSHIRE

We are a school in flux, located in an area whose rural character is being supplanted by small townships 'serving' small industries, and to a lesser extent Oxford, Cowley and the Armed Forces bases. We are at the centre of a rapidly expanding and therefore character-changing, development area, scheduled to increase its population by a very large number. Generally then, a state of confusion, such as arises in any contemporary 'growth' situation.

Internally, a similar situation prevails. The amalgamation of the town's only grammar and secondary modern schools, next-door to each other, is now, some six years later and in spite of extensive building, too small and inadequately served by its buildings. Thus, this September, a new lower school opens to house the first three years, eventually. It is purpose-built, and open-plan, but about one and a half miles from the present accommodation.

Within the school, the English department, like many others, finds itself changing too, though in this instance it is the result of the expressed needs of the teachers and the children themselves rather than external forces as is the case with the town.

Thus we find ourselves not in any 'clean-sheet' situation where we might, even if we wanted to, overlay any 'ideal' comprehensive English curriculum, but, like many schools, collecting our resources and adapting the present physical prescriptions to suit the already mentioned needs of the staff and children: so we are concerned with 'directions,' head-held intentions rather than written curriculum. Our report for the commission will reflect this state – developments, the transformation of English teaching in whatever ways seem desirable. Our remarks, therefore, will concern themselves with curriculum change in English, rather than English in curriculum change.

We hope to present a picture of our activities as they reflect the resighting of 'English' in those situations where it is needed; organic to 'art', 'drama,' 'music' and 'film.' We will report on the de-emphasis though not exclusion of class teaching, and the development of individual and small group learning situations; the provision of 'framework' within which to hold and help direct these activities – including the Nuffield 'Resources for Learning' topics. We intend also to include and have on display, samples of the kind of work done, for reference.

At root, however, what we hope will be conveyed, is what English 'is' to the members of this department – not separable from those things which evoke its use, whether they be personal or public, imagined or real, historical or projected, geographical or allegorical, nor separable from its fellow media.

Gordon Mason
English Department
Bicester School
April 1971

Canada

A language-centred approach to the English curriculum

The language-centred English curriculum to be described evolved from an in-service professional development activity of the Board of Education for the Borough of North York, in Toronto, Canada. School board officials, subject coordinators and teaching staff all recognized the need for fresh insights and approaches. To this end, some 35 teachers from kindergarten to University-entrance classrooms, consultants, resource people, principals and inspectors met throughout 1967-68 for an intensive 100-hour course concerned with the theory and practice of English language studies.

Upon completion of the in-service course, smaller groups of classroom teachers continued to meet regularly to discuss more specific applications of theoretical principles to curriculum and classroom practice. Within a few months, these teachers produced four related sets of curriculum guidelines, one from each of the primary, intermediate, junior and senior secondary levels, and published under the title *Language and Linguistics: Guidelines for a Sequential Program.* In every case, suggestions were of a tentative, exploratory nature, and were designed for classroom adoption on a 'pilot project' basis only.

One such pilot program was launched in Georges Vanier Secondary School, a new and rapidly growing suburban Toronto school offering a fully composite curriculum to students with a wide range of vocational and academic goals. In the school year 1969-70, the student population, ranging in age from roughly 15 to 20 years, numbered about 1800, and the teaching and para-professional staff about 150.

An English department of about 25 members, a department head and two assistant heads are together responsible for planning and implementing the English curriculum in the school. A reasonable degree of autonomy is given to the staff team, who operate within very broad guidelines suggested by the Provincial Department of Education and the local Board of Education. Initiative for curriculum change is expected to emerge from the classroom itself, moving thence from departmental discussion to the attention of the local Board's subject coordinators, who in turn facilitate development and discussion of innovative programs on a wider basis.

The innovative work in the curriculum project to be discussed provided a necessary complement to the strongly literary-critical tradition implicit in the school's English curriculum. While film and media studies were becoming established within the curriculum, little formal attention had been given to the English language itself, aside from incidental study of the history of the language at grade 11 level. Of the sixteen different English courses offered in 1968-1969, it would be fair to say that only one, the pilot project, took the English language to be its subject matter; of the twelve different courses offered in 1970-71, however at least four purport to be language-centred.

More recent developments of the pilot project will be considered: the impact of the original curriculum guidelines upon the total English curriculum of several different schools in North York will be assessed, and further adaptation of the original materials within a large secondary school in British Columbia will be described briefly.

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March 1971

For preconference reading

The books listed below are obviously too many for any one person to start on before July, but some you will have read already, and also some are easier to get in Britain and some in North America. Apologies for giving mainly British prices only, but these are the only ones available as this is prepared for printing.

James Britton, *Language and Learning* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press 1970, £2.50)
a study of the relationship between language and learning, from infancy to late adolescence, and in all areas of a child's life, in and out of school. Brings together the thinking of the conference's chairman over a long period of work.
Jerome S. Bruner, *Toward a Theory of Instruction* (W. W. Norton, New York, 1968, 95p)
sets out the ideas of a major reforming theorist in American education. Chapter Four, 'Man: a Course of Study', describes an experimental course which has been widely tried in the USA.
John Dixon, *Growth through English* (Oxford 1969, 45p)
the account of the Dartmouth Conference of 1967 which lies behind York 1971.
Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* (Indiana University Press 1964, 80p)
a series of five lectures given for CBC, and so to a non-specialist audience, arguing the case for literature in all education.
P. Hirst and R. S. Peters, *The Logic of Education* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1970, £2)
specially recommended for sub-group 3.
Richard M. Jones, *Fantasy and Feeling in Education* (University of London Press, 1968, £2.90. Also recently in Harper Torchbooks, no doubt less expensively).
partly a critique of Bruner (above), mainly on grounds of his overstressing cognitive skills and curricular materials at the expense of emotional skills and pedagogy (p.97). Also an attempt to build a 'complete' theory of instruction based on an understanding of emotional growth through Eriksonian (post-Freudian) psychology.
K. R. Krathwohl, B. S. Bloom and B. B. Masia, *The Affective Domain, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (David McKay, New York and Longmans, London).
specially recommended for sub-group 6, but of general concern also.
John Maxwell, and Anthony Tovatt, (ed): *On Writing Behavioral Objectives for English* (NCTE Washington, 1970, $2.50)
done by the Commission on English Curriculum of the NCTE - eleven papers discussing pros and cons, and cautioning against 'premature and unsophisticated attempts'. Good bibliography compiled April 1970.
W. Kenneth Richmond, *The School Curriculum* (Methuen Educational Paperbacks 1971, £1.40)
contains useful introductions to, or reminders of, the recent history of curriculum development in the USA and Britain, together with provocative ideas about where we should, perhaps, be going.

Michael F. Shugrue, *English in a Decade of Change* (New York, Pegasus, 1968).
surveys trends since 1958 in curriculum, teacher preparation, and patterns of school organization.
James Squire and Roger Applebee, *Teaching English in the United Kingdom* (NCTE Washington, 1969).
a valuable survey of British practice, interesting to practitioners and theorists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Valuable also to American members who belong to NCTE or have access to its journals are the articles "A Reference Shelf for Curriculum Planning" in *English Journal*, vol. 59, Nov and Dec 1970.